

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

MARCH 1, 2010 \$3.50



## HAITI'S PASSION

MARGARITA A. MOONEY  
TERRENCE DEMPSEY

# OF MANY THINGS

I have some exciting news to share: My nephew is getting married. Matthew made his announcement around Christmas, and since then he hasn't stopped talking about his upcoming nuptials. By the way, he's four years old.

Matthew's wedding was originally scheduled for 2090, when he would be 85. "That way I can save up a lot of money," he explained. "But how old will Mommy be?" I asked him. "One hundred and twenty-six!" he said gleefully. My nephew had also chosen the venue: China. Specifically, the Great Wall. "Is there a church there?" he asked. We consulted Google Earth to investigate.

As Matthew outlined it, he and his fiancée, Rachel (whom he met at the Blue Kangaroo day-care center, that dating hotbed), would be married at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York (or, as he called it, "the big church"). Afterward the wedding party, including his 126-year old parents and his 159-year-old grandmother, would fly to China for the "second part" of the wedding Mass. When I asked what would be served at the reception, he replied, quite sensibly, "Chinese food, Uncle Jim!" After the reception would come fireworks. "Everybody likes fireworks," he said. Hard to disagree with that.

"Do you wanna hear my speech for the end of the wedding?" he asked one night on the phone. Sure, I said. "Thank you for coming to my wedding," he said. "Have a nice day."

Last week Matthew realized that our superannuation might make it difficult to attend the wedding, so he moved the date up to 2025. And China is out. Disneyworld is in. And a honeymoon? "Mexico!" he said. "Because I've never been there."

Young children often get excited about very specific things. Matthew's earlier passions were, in order: his guitar, Bruce Springsteen and Big Ben. His older brother, Charles, now 11, also went through what parents call (with

fingers crossed) "phases." As he matured, he moved from Thomas the Tank Engine to dinosaurs to "Star Wars" to Legos to James Bond and, currently, video games. And while I don't encourage adults to spend too much time with Thomas and his train friends James and Percy, a child's enthusiasm can be instructive for all of us. When was the last time you thought about your faith, for example, with similar enthusiasm?

"Enthusiasm" derives from the Greek *en* and *theos*, to have "God placed in you." It's similar to *inspire*, having "the Spirit in you." The enthusiast is filled with the Spirit. I wonder if Catholics need to be better acquainted with this way of participating in the Spirit. Whenever I meet young evangelicals talking excitedly about Jesus, I wonder, "Am I that enthusiastic?" I feel that I am, but do I convey that passion? In short, is Matthew more enthusiastic about his wedding than I am about my faith?

Of course, we don't want to approach our faith like children. Oh wait; yes we do, as Jesus recommended. So can we be joyful, excited and, above all, single-minded about the Gospel? "Purity of heart is to will one thing," as Søren Kierkegaard wrote. Perhaps this is something of what he meant—not the seen-it-all, world-weary jadedness that pervades some Catholic quarters, much less the deadly seriousness that sometimes accompanies preaching and teaching, but rather the joyous enthusiasm prevalent in some evangelical circles, which was probably characteristic of the early Christians.

So these days I look to children to remind me about enthusiasm. Christ is risen after all, and if we can't be enthusiastic about that, then we have no business calling ourselves Christians. Just ask Matthew. Oh wait, you can't. He's too busy planning his wedding, now set for June 12, 2025. Save the date.

**JAMES MARTIN, S.J.**

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Transcripts and audio clips from the **Campion Award** ceremony and, on our podcast, a discussion of the 2009 **Oscar** nominees. Plus, from the archives, an interview with former Haitian president **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).





### When Content Was King

The unveiling of Apple's iPad last month may have finally ushered in the age of the e-reader. For years companies have been experimenting with electronic reading devices that serve as miniature libraries and magazine stands, but the general public has been slow to sign on. With the advent of the iPad, which also serves as a mini-laptop and film studio, the day may soon be here when e-readers are as ubiquitous as iPods.

Questions remain, however, about the content served up on electronic readers and who should profit from it. Amazon.com has been battling with book publishers over prices for digital books sold on the company's Kindle reading device. Newspapers have also complained about Amazon's demand for a 70 percent cut of Kindle content. Apple seems willing to give publishers a larger share of revenue, but whether they can survive on a reduced revenue stream is an open question. Of particular concern is the fate of small publishers and especially of journals. Amazon has been eager to market magazines like Newsweek and The New Yorker on the Kindle, but good luck finding The American Scholar or National Review.

Devotees of electronic reading devices extol their portability and affordability. Who can argue against books for \$10? We may be entering the golden age of e-readers, when technology is ample and content cheap. These days, however, will be short-lived. There will be a time, sooner than we expect, when nearly everyone will own an e-reader. But what will they be reading?

### Corruption and Aid to Haiti

As Haiti struggles to make effective use of billions in aid, Transparency International has just published a handbook to help agencies there and elsewhere combat the kinds of corruption that could prevent assistance from reaching the neediest. Roslyn Hees, a co-author of the handbook, *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations*, has said that post-earthquake Haiti presently represents "a perfect storm for high corruption risk: You have a seriously damaged institutional infrastructure, a country with endemic corruption...and sudden influxes of huge amounts of resources." In 2009, Haiti ranked 168th on T.I.'s annual Corruption Perceptions Index.

The idea for the handbook arose from experiences after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Large sums raised for stricken countries there did not always reach those most affected. The book provides agencies with a practical, hands-on tool describing good practices that could be useful for

agency staffs in preventing corruption in their operations.

T.I. acknowledges that anti-corruption practices cannot be the first priority after disasters. But once the initial steps to cope with the devastation are past, then, in the reconstruction phase, prudent practices should be brought into play. The handbook notes that corruption is not limited to financial mismanagement, but may also include nepotism and sexual exploitation. As Haiti's recovery gets under way, the handbook should be a useful resource not only in that country, but in other parts of the world, too, when natural disaster strikes again.

### Arctic Contemplatives

Readers of Sigrid Undset's *Kristin Lavransdatter*, a trilogy of novels set within the very Catholic culture of 14th-century Norway, will especially appreciate what is something of a historical U-turn. Ten years ago the Cistercians, a Catholic contemplative order based on the Rule of St. Benedict, began to re-establish a Catholic presence in Norway not seen since the Reformation.

It started with a group of Trappistine nuns, mostly from the Mississippi Abbey in the United States, who envisioned a new community on the island of Tautra in the Trondheim Fjord. Centuries earlier, in 1207, a Cistercian community was founded there that ultimately grew to include 30 monks responsible for 170 small farms. The sisters bought land near the ruins of the old monastery, moved to the site and built a new cloister, workplace, guesthouse and chapel: Tautra Mariakloster.

Now the sisters have been joined in Norway by four monks from the French Abbey of Cîteaux, who dedicated their own new monastery, Munkeby Mariakloster, last September. Their mission is to offer to those who come seeking it "a quiet presence with the spiritual riches of liturgy, meditation, and *lectio divina*." The monks are rebuilding a monastery established in 1180. In addition to Cistercians, Dominicans and Poor Clares have also returned to Norway. Contemplative Benedictines live in Denmark and Sweden; Brigittines and Carmelites in Iceland.

Amid the world's frenetic rush, it is easy to forget that contemplatives quietly offer their prayer, manual labor and presence, befriending neighbors at the glacial pace that friendship requires even in the era of Facebook. The outreach of a handful of monks and nuns is a vital—though quiet and small—part of the church's ministry. As Pope Benedict XVI suggested, it provides "places where men and women...run to seek God and learn to recognize the signs of the presence of Christ, of his charity and of his mercy."

# A Debt to the Future

Following World War II, there were two things that kept the U.S. budget deficit under control: the fiscal responsibility of the Republican Party (and conservative Democrats) and fear of inflation.

For Republicans, deficits were the greatest sin of government. President Herbert Hoover even made the Depression worse by trying to balance the budget. Democrats correctly argued for deficit spending during recessions, but until the Clinton administration, they ignored the other principle of Keynesian economics that required surpluses during good times. One of the reasons the country faces grave fiscal problems today is that during the Bush administration, Republicans abandoned their commitment to fiscal responsibility by instituting tax cuts, embarking on two costly wars and passing a government-subsidized prescription drug plan (Medicare D) without paying for it. They never tried to balance the budget.

Normally, inflation would have resulted from these deficits and easy money policies, as it did during most of the postwar period. Wages and prices would go up until the Federal Reserve Board cut the money supply, bringing about a recession.

What was different in this crisis was the lack of inflation in response to deficit spending. Some credited the Federal Reserve for this miracle, but a more substantial reason was globalization. Cheap imports kept prices down, and the fear of losing jobs to outsourcing kept wages from rising. The Chinese were happy to lend us money; so interest rates did not go up, even though consumers and the government were both spending beyond their means.

Inflation appears to have been channeled into the one area unaffected by globalization: housing. When housing prices went up, we did not call it inflation; we thought we were getting richer, at least if we owned a home. Home equity loans let us tap this ephemeral wealth. When the housing market collapsed, it brought everything down with it.

Where do we go from here? During a recession you do not try to balance the budget. But there has to be a realistic long-term strategy for paying down some of our debt. Let no one fool you. Deficit reduction is going to be extremely painful. There is no easy solution. The administration's deficit-reduction plan is a bare beginning. As a nation, we were irresponsible and foolish, and now we are going to have to pay for it. Nothing can be exempt from budget cuts,

whether it be Social Security, Medicare or spending on defense and education. Tax increases must be on the table.

Congress appears to be incapable of dealing with long-term problems, like the deficit or global warming. Our constitutional system of checks and balances makes it much easier to stop something than to do something. Every member fights for his or her district, interest group or campaign contributor. With members unwilling to take the long view and sacrifice for the common good, Congress is gridlocked (see our editorial, "Dysfunctional," 2/15).

One way out of the current impasse would be to create a statutory commission with the authority to draw up deficit reduction legislation that must be voted up or down by a majority in Congress without amendment. Legislation enacted under such constraints would give legislators cover to do what is right but painful. Members could tell their constituents and donors that there was no way to save their slice of the pie. Unfortunately, the Senate rejected such a commission in January without offering any other way toward fiscal responsibility. In response, the president announced that he would appoint a commission by executive order, but it would have the power only to make recommendations and thus could prove ineffective. The House, however, where tax bills constitutionally originate, should try to give the president's commission a congressional mandate.

Earlier generations of Americans were willing to make difficult decisions to ensure a brighter future for their children. As a nation, they sacrificed and paid taxes to build infrastructure and win wars. What is missing in the country today is this sense of responsible patriotism, which recognizes the obligation to make such sacrifices. Instead we have spent and consumed with insufficient attention to how our habits would affect future generations. No doubt, wage stagnation played a role too, as middle-class homeowners sought additional income from their homes. Yet we cannot exempt ourselves from the responsibility to address the crisis at hand.

It is easy to blame the gridlock in Washington on politicians, but unless politicians hear from the American people that they are willing to make sacrifices for the future of their children and the nation, then the gridlock will continue until the country finds itself in economic freefall.





# Catholic Social Teaching and Worker Justice

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Bishop of Rockville Center, NY

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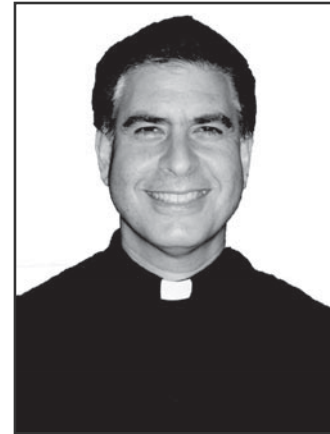
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# Spirituality, Psychology, and Virtue: Your Guide to a Flourishing Life

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Explore the roles of virtue, psychology, and spirituality in creating and sustaining a flourishing life. Only 20 % of the U.S. population appear to be flourishing – characterized by an enthusiastic commitment to personal and professional growth and effective resilience in the face of disappointments.

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Explore the role of Christian spirituality in living a virtuous – and therefore flourishing – life. Many of the major challenges to flourishing will be addressed. Your guide, pioneering psychologist, professor and Jesuit priest John J.

Cecero, applies concepts from his book, *Praying Through Lifetraps: A Psycho-Spiritual Path to Freedom* to explain how lifetraps, core fears and experiences, prevent us from flourishing. With fresh perspective and insight, he will explore depression, anxiety, and isolation, as well as various forms of impulsivity and addictions to processes (e.g. work, gambling, shopping, sex, etc.) and substances (e.g., food, alcohol, drugs, etc.).

These talks illustrate how the vast repertoire of spiritual tools and

strategies within the Christian tradition can powerfully supplement the insights and practices within psychology to help us overcome challenges to flourishing. You will gain specific guidelines and spiritual practices to cultivate gratitude, temperance, humility, and forgiveness, among other key virtues, in the service of flourishing.

### About Your Speaker

Fr. John Cecero, a Jesuit priest and clinical psychologist, is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at Fordham University. He is also Rector of the Jesuit Community and Director of the Center for Spirituality and Mental Health at Fordham.

Fr. Cecero researches personality assessment and the role of spirituality in mental health. He published *Praying through Lifetraps: A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Freedom*. Father Cecero maintains a part-time clinical practice, in which he sees individuals and couples for outpatient psychotherapy.

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# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## HOMELESSNESS

### Recession Drives Surge Of Poverty in Suburbs

**H**ave persistent unemployment and waves of foreclosures led to a resurgence of the nation's once widespread scourge of homelessness? The problem appears to be making a comeback, but not in the urban and rural communities where homelessness persisted in past decades. This time homelessness is becoming a prominent problem in the nation's suburban communities.

The last formal count of the nation's homeless, a 2009 report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, tracked the problem to the end of September 2008. It found that while the overall number of homeless people remained steady at 1.6 million people, the number of homeless in suburbs and rural communities had spiked dramatically to 32 percent from 23 percent. It also reported that the number of homeless families in shelters grew from about 473,000 to 517,000.

Those figures complement the findings of a 2010 Brookings Institution report on poverty trends. That report, while arguing that federal anti-poverty responses remain mired in older models of rural- and urban-focused poverty, revealed that the nation's largest and fastest-growing low-income popula-

tions are in the suburbs. Suburban poverty in large metropolitan areas grew 25 percent between 2000 and 2008. Midwestern cities and suburbs experienced the largest poverty rate increase during that period.

The U.S. Census Bureau will try to



**"Pinellas Hope," a tent city for homeless single people outside St. Petersburg, Fla., administered by Catholic Charities.**

get a clearer national perspective on homelessness with its "Make the Homeless Count," program, which will run from March 29 to 31. Some communities are aiding the campaign by encouraging their homeless residents to step out from the shadows. The Los

## MEXICO

### Bishops Urge New Strategy In War Against Drug Cartels

**T**he Bishops' Conference of Mexico has released a pastoral letter calling on the Mexican government to reconsider its force-reliant strategy in combating powerful narcotics trafficking cartels even as it asks the government to respond to a wave of violence that has claimed more than 18,000 lives over the past three years. "Security is not directly or principally related to the ability to use force, the number of police officers, the degree of militarization or the purchasing of weapons," Mexico's bishops wrote.

"With the passage of time, the participation of the armed forces in the fight against organized crime has provoked uncertainty in the population.... It is very clear this environment of violence and insecurity in which we are living denotes a sense of the loss of God."

Mexico has been involved in a crackdown on narcotics trafficking cartels that have been fighting turf wars over lucrative smuggling routes into the United States and fomenting an increase in addictions at home by developing domestic markets for drugs. The federal government has

dispatched more than 40,000 soldiers and federal police officers to battle the cartels in regions like Chihuahua in northern Mexico, Sinaloa on the Pacific Coast and Michoacan to the west of Mexico City, but results have been mixed. Public support for the campaign appears to be declining.

Violence has not decreased in many of the states where the cartels have been most active over the past three years. Ciudad Juárez, which neighbors El Paso, Tex., has been the scene of mass slayings—like the Jan. 31 shooting of at least 16 young people at a birthday party. New problems also have emerged during the military response: an increase in allegations of human rights abuses against the military and evidence that the cartels have





Angeles Mayor's Office of the Census has been asking residents to donate socks at L.A. police stations, city hall and other locations. The socks, along with food, will be distributed to the homeless at six events across the city on March 30 to encourage their partic-

ipation in the national count.

Norma Vega, the executive director of the L.A. mayor's census office, told Southern California Public Radio: "It's our sort of small way of getting hopefully more awareness about this issue. And the socks are a way to remind us on an everyday basis that we do have a population out there that needs help."

The effect of another year of rising joblessness and foreclosures at rates not seen since the Great Depression has not yet been depicted statistically, but social welfare agencies around the country offer anecdotal evidence of growing need and increasing family homelessness as the nation continues to confront a "perfect storm of foreclosures, unemployment and a shortage of affordable housing," as one social service director told the Associated Press recently.

Catholic Charities USA's Fourth Quarter Snapshot Survey, released on Jan. 28, revealed a dramatic increase nationwide in requests for life-sustaining emergency services. Of the 47

agencies responding to the survey, 83 percent reported an increase in the number of working poor seeking assistance; 70 percent reported an increase in families seeking assistance; 57 percent reported an increase in support requests from homeless people seeking assistance; and 51 percent reported an increase in requests from the middle class. Catholic Charities offered some perspective on the statistics: "These are unemployed parents; two-income families struggling to make ends meet; pregnant women and teens, homeless with nowhere to turn; former donors to Catholic Charities organizations now in need of help; and repeat clients with deeper needs and greater barriers to self-sufficiency.... The survey shows new and underserved populations continuing to request help. In sobering numbers, brutal temperatures coupled with rising utility rates and loss of income have left individuals and families hungry, homeless, and cold—many for the first time."

diversified into such other illegal activities as piracy, extortion and kidnapping. Sixty percent of respondents in a survey released Feb. 15 by the Mexico City polling firm Buendia y Laredo said violence had increased over the past six months, and 56 percent of respondents said the federal government's crackdown on narcotics trafficking had made the country "less secure."

In their Feb. 15 letter, the bishops of Mexico attributed the ineffectual government response to the escalating violence to a number of causes: crises of legality and morality, political polarization after the contentious 2006 election, a lack of educational and employment opportunities for young people and "a weakening of the social fabric."

The problem with the cartels is not

new, the bishops said, but they urged new solutions and discarded any talk of returning to the old practice of local governments and the cartels brokering informal agreements that allowed the drug traffickers to carry out illegal activities so long as violence was kept to a minimum and bystanders were left alone.

The letter instead urged the federal government to treat the violence in Mexico as a public health issue. It called for combating the cartels and violence through fixes to the legal system that would eliminate impunity; better cooperation in law enforcement and intelligence-gathering among Mexico's federal, state and municipal governments; and structural reforms

to improve the country's long-underperforming economy, which the bishops said fails to provide enough legitimate forms of employment.

"Inequality, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, low salaries, discrimination, forced migration and the inhumane levels of living expose many people to violence," the letter said.



**Soldiers raid a drug cartel hideout in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, on Feb. 14.**

## Irish-Vatican Summit On Sex-Abuse Ends

At the end of a two-day summit meeting with Irish bishops about the scandal of sexual abuse in Ireland, the Vatican said in a statement on Feb. 16 that “errors of judgment and omissions” were at the heart of the crisis. It said church leaders recognized the sense of “pain and anger, betrayal, scandal and shame” that those errors have provoked among many Irish Catholics. “All those present recognized that this grave crisis has led to a breakdown in trust in the church’s leadership and has damaged her witness to the Gospel and its moral teaching,” the statement said. Pope Benedict XVI said sexual abuse by priests was a “heinous crime” and a grave sin “that offends God and wounds the dignity of the human person created in his image,” and he urged Irish bishops to act courageously to repair their failures to deal properly with such cases. The pope convened the bishops in response to the public outrage following an independent report that faulted the church for its handling of 325 claims of sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin in the years 1975 to 2004.

## Cellphone Justice

Metals found in such everyday electronic items as mobile phones and computers, mined illegally in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, are helping to fund a conflict that has caused millions of deaths, says Global Witness, a nongovernmental organization that focuses on natural resources and international trade. “The main warring parties in eastern Congo...control much of the lucrative trade in minerals that produce tin, tantalum and tungsten, as well as gold,” according to a G.W. statement. “These groups regularly commit horrific abuses against the civilian population, including mass

## NEWS BRIEFS

Catholic Relief Services’ anti-hunger programs around the world during 2008 helped an estimated 49.3 million people in 142 programs, according to **Bruce White**, a hunger policy analyst for the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development agency.

- Ending the church’s sponsorship of central Oregon’s largest medical facility, Baker’s Bishop Robert F. Vasa said the **St. Charles Medical Center** in Bend, Ore., can no longer be called Catholic.
- A **sexual abuse scandal** continues to unfold in Germany, where more than 100 men have now come forward claiming they suffered abuse at the hands of Jesuit priests or lay teachers at Jesuit schools in Germany.
- On Feb. 12 the Catholic bishops of Florida urged **Gov. Charlie Crist** to stay the execution of Martin Grossman, arguing that “execution is seen as an act of revenge for an offender’s deeds and does little to deter future criminal acts in society.”
- The White House advisor **Cecilia Muñoz** told participants at the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering on Feb. 8 that the Obama administration remains committed to passing health care and immigration reform legislation, despite political setbacks in Congress.



**Catholic Relief Services in Haiti**

murder, rape, torture and forced recruitment.” The group challenged leading electronics companies to come clean about where they obtain their materials during the Feb. 15 opening day of the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain. “It is time for electronics companies to show they are serious about eliminating conflict minerals from their supply chains,” said a Global Witness campaigner, Daniel Balint-Kurti. Global Witness is urging the U.N. Security Council to use targeted sanctions against companies that support armed groups in eastern Congo by the illicit mineral trade.

## Haiti’s Status: Grim

Haitian authorities issued a distressing statistical update of a nation and a people in peril on Feb. 6. Approximately 212,000 people are now believed dead and 300,000

injured. More than 1.2 million people are in spontaneous settlements, and 467,701 people have left Port-au-Prince for outlying regions. Only 272,000 out of an estimated 1.2 million displaced persons have received emergency shelter support. Sanitation in temporary settlement sites remains a concern, with less than 5 percent of needs being met. Aid agencies estimate that 18,000 latrines are needed in Port-au-Prince to support 900,000 people. With the arrival of thousands of people from Port-au-Prince in villages along the border with the Dominican Republic, the food security situation, which was already precarious, is getting worse. An estimated 17,500 children are suffering from acute malnutrition and 3,100 of these are severely malnourished and in need of life-saving assistance.

From CNS and other sources.



# Prison Breakout

In the year 2000, state and federal prisons held about 1.3 million inmates, and local jails held around 600,000. A decade earlier, in 1990, state and federal prisons held about 700,000 inmates, and local jails held around 400,000. Thus between 1990 and 2000, the country's incarcerated population nearly doubled, growing from 1.1 million to 1.9 million.

On Nov. 15, 2000, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice." The statement rejected as unwise and inhumane the sentencing policies that had contributed to the decade-long increase in the incarcerated population. The bishops also called for greater public investments in crime-prevention programs and substance-abuse treatment programs.

It was a brilliant balancing act, expressing sincere regard for crime victims while condemning the "culture of violence" that prevails in many homes and neighborhoods, summarizing crime statistics and trends while infusing nearly every page with Catholic social teaching. Accordingly, the statement was generally well received by liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans and Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Now, however, it is time for the U.S.C.C.B. to dust off and update its 2000 statement, issue a new one this year and take center civic stage in preaching and pushing for public policies that protect the public without

further increasing the number of people who are behind bars.

In 2008, the latest year for which there are complete data, state and federal prisons held about 1.5 million people, and local jails held around 800,000 people. Thus, between 2000 and 2008 the country's incarcerated population increased from 1.9 million to 2.3 million. That 20-percent increase occurred even though more than 600,000 people have been released from state and federal prisons each year since 2000.

On the one hand, research by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that nearly 60 percent of the post-2000 increase in the prison population consists of offenders whose latest crime of conviction is a violent crime. And, as summarized in the latest study sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, as much as a third of the post-1994 crime drop nationally is probably due to increased incarceration.

On the other hand, the same bureau data indicate that fully half of all state prisoners, and about 90 percent of all federal prisoners, are serving time for a nonviolent crime. Numerous empirical studies and surveys indicate that prisons today hold hundreds of thousands of persons whose only crimes, including ones for which they were never arrested, have been nonviolent crimes involving illegal drug possession, use or small-scale sales.

There is early but encouraging evidence that state criminal justice systems are punishing smarter, not harder. Between 2000 and 2008, for

instance, 28 states actually decreased their imprisonment rates, including 30-percent drops in states as politically diverse as Massachusetts and Texas. Three states—Maryland, New Jersey and New York—actually held fewer prisoners in 2008 than they did in 2000. But the federal prison system continues to grow at an unprecedented clip (about 4.7 percent a year).

Many Catholic lawmakers give the bishops fits (or worse) when it comes to church teaching on vital issues like abortion, but these same officials are likely to follow where the U.S.C.C.B. leads on crime and punishment.

Prison policy needs to allow for the possibility of redemption.

For one thing, post-2000 public opinion has shifted in ways favorable to prevention and treatment policies like

those advocated by the bishops a decade ago. For another, as the post-2007 recession reduces government revenues, more politicians are "getting religion" with respect to scaling back the over \$70 billion a year for "corrections" that taxpayers lavish mainly on long-term lockups.

Still, the biggest and best reason for the bishops to rally anew for zero prison growth and related policies is revealed in the beautiful words of Pope John Paul II with which the U.S.C.C.B. opened its 2000 statement. On July 9, 2000, the pope envisioned a day "when our conscience can be certain of having done everything possible to prevent crime" and "to offer those who commit crimes a way of redeeming themselves and making a positive return to society." Amen.

JOHN J. DIJULIO JR. is the author of *Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future* (Univ. of California Press, 2007).





# THIRD EDITION ROMAN MISSAL

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON DIVINE WORSHIP

*And with you*

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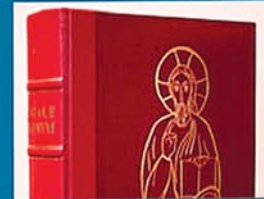
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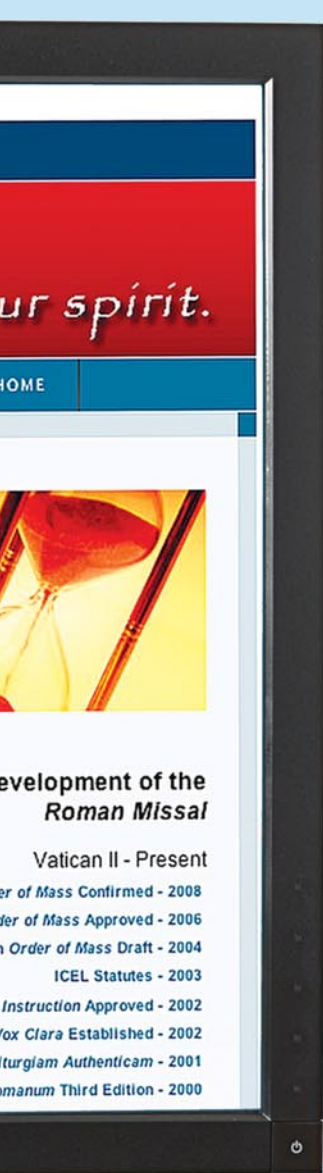
A Message from  
**Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli**  
Chairman, USCCB Committee  
on Divine Worship



**New Words: A Deeper Meaning,  
but the Same Mass**



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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR  
LITURGICAL RENEWAL

# Welcoming the Roman Missal

BY ARTHUR J. SERRATELLI

**T**o change means that one is alive. This applies to people, institutions and languages. Change is a natural development even when it meets resistance from those who have become comfortable with old, familiar ways. The challenge of change faces Catholics now, as the church in the United States and the rest of the English-speaking world prepares for the most significant change in the liturgy since the introduction of the new Order of Mass in 1970.

On Nov. 17, 2009, the U.S. bishops completed a review and approved the translation of the Roman Missal, third edition, concluding a work begun in 2004, when the International Commission on English in the Liturgy presented to us first-draft translations. Now, as we await confirmation of the text by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, we prepare for its reception and implementation.

Many have asked questions, expressed concerns or simply wondered about the reasons for the new translation and the goals of its implementation.

## Why a New Text?

The Roman Missal, the ritual text for the celebration of the Mass, was first introduced in Latin as the "typical edition." Periodically it is revised. Pope John Paul II announced the publication of the third edition of the missal during the jubilee year in 2000. Once that text was published, it became the official text to be used in the celebration of the Mass, and conferences of bishops had to begin preparing vernacular translations. The third edition contains a number of new elements: prayers for the observances of feasts/memorials of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the eucharistic prayers, additional Masses and prayers for various needs and intentions as well as some minor modifications of instructions for the celebration of the Mass.

To aid the process of translation, the Congregation for Divine

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**MOST REV. ARTHUR J. SERRATELLI** is bishop of Paterson, N.J., and chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship.





Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued "Liturgiam Authenticam" in 2001, as the fifth instruction on the vernacular translation of the Roman liturgy. The instruction outlines the principles and rules for translation, which have evolved and been nuanced in the years since the Second Vatican Council, as the church has grown into its use of modern vernacular languages in the celebration of the liturgy. These principles govern the fresh English translation of the missal.

## The Translation

The 16th-century Dutch humanist and theologian Erasmus once showed his students 150 different styles they could use when constructing a single Latin sentence. He amply demonstrated that there are many ways to express a single idea. In terms of translation, there are many ways to translate a sentence, but no single translation will ever completely satisfy everyone.

Liturgical language is important for the life of the church. The well-known axiom *Lex orandi, lex credendi* reminds Christians that what we pray is not only the expression of our sentiment and reverence toward God, but what also speaks to us and articulates for us the faith of the church. Our words in the liturgy are not simply expressions of one individual in one particular place at one time in history. Rather, they pass on the faith of the church from one generation to the next. For this reason, we bishops take seriously our responsibility to provide translations of liturgical texts that are both accurate and inspiring, hence the sometimes rather passionate discussion of words, syntax and phrases. The new translation provides theologically accurate prayers in a language with dignity and beauty that can be understood, as called for in "Liturgiam Authenticam," No. 25:

So that the content of the original texts may be evident and comprehensible even to the faithful who lack any special intellectual formation, the translations should be characterized by a kind of language which is easily understandable, yet which at the same time preserves these texts' dignity, beauty, and doctrinal precision. By means of words of praise and adoration that foster reverence and gratitude in the face of God's majesty, his power, his mercy and his transcendent nature, the translations will respond to the hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people of our own time, while contributing also to the dignity and beauty of the liturgical celebration itself.

Speaking to a group of translators gathered in Rome in November 1965 about their work regarding liturgical texts, Pope Paul VI quoted St. Jerome, who was also a translator: "If I translate word by word, it sounds absurd; if I am forced to change something in the word order or style, I seem to have stopped being a translator." Pope Paul went on to say: "The vernacular now taking its place in the liturgy ought to be within the grasp of all, even children and the uneducated. But, as you well know, the language should always be worthy of the noble realities it signifies, set apart from the everyday speech of the street and the marketplace, so that it will affect the spirit and enkindle the heart with love of God."

For the missal's third edition, the translation process has involved linguistic, biblical and liturgical scholars from each of the 11 English-speaking countries that ICEL serves; this text will be used by the church throughout the English-speaking world. It is important to remember that we Americans are but one part of a larger English-speaking community.

Proponents of the new text sometimes argue, perhaps unfairly, that the texts currently in use in the liturgy (in the present Sacramentary), the product of great efforts by translators from 1969 to 1973, are marked by a style of English that is flat and uninspiring. That text, however, has well served the English-speaking world for more than 30 years and has enabled the church to take great strides toward the council's goal of "full, conscious, and active participation" in the liturgy. One should be careful not to judge too hastily what has been the language of worship. The present texts are familiar and comfortable.

Those who have already been critical of the new text, often without having seen more than a few examples out of context, express concern about unfamiliar vocabulary and unnecessarily complicated sentence structures. Having been involved in the work of translation with ICEL and with the bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, I can attest that the new translation is good and worthy of use. It is not perfect, but perfection will come only when the liturgy on earth gives way to that of heaven, where all the saints praise God with one voice. Change will not come easily, as both priest-celebrants (including us bishops) and the lay faithful will have to work to prepare to celebrate the liturgy fully.

## Where We Go From Here

We humans are creatures of habit. We Catholics are creatures of ritual. Ritual is based on the familiar, on patterns learned. A liturgical assembly can fully, consciously and actively participate in the liturgy because the priest and people know

The new text of the Roman Missal represents a change in the language, but not in the ritual.



what they are doing. Any change in the rituals will affect how we participate. It is natural to resist such changes simply to remain grounded in the familiar. The new text of the Roman Missal represents a change in the language, but not in the ritual. There have been only a few minor adjustments to the rubrics of the Order of Mass, and most of them were already in effect. So how do we prepare ourselves to use the new text? We bishops have called for an extensive process of catechesis leading to the implementation of the text. I propose several important approaches for individuals and parishes.

First, get to know the text. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us of the richness and importance of liturgical texts in his apostolic exhortation "Sacramentum Caritatis": "These texts contain riches which have preserved and expressed the faith and experience of the People of God over its two-thousand-year history" (No. 40). Many have pointed out that the vocabulary, syntax and sentence structure will be markedly different from the current text. The guiding principles of translation call for the preservation of biblical imagery and poetic language (and structure). The new texts contain many beautiful examples of language drawn directly from the Scriptures, especially the Gospels and the Psalms: "from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Psalm 113, Eucharistic Prayer 3), "sending down your Spirit...like the dewfall"

(Psalm 133, Eucharistic Prayer 2), "blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb" (See Revelation 19, communion rite), and "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof..." (Matthew 8, communion rite). These are but a few examples.

Of particular note in the new texts are expressions of reverence for God, articulated not only by the vocabulary but by the style of expression in addressing God. Forms of address such as "we humbly beseech you, O Lord," "we beg you," "we call upon your majesty" and "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" express our posture before the Lord, to whom we look for every gift and grace. Some may find the use of such self-deprecatory language uncomfortable at first, but it effectively acknowledges the primacy of God's grace and our dependence on it for salvation.

The texts may be unfamiliar now, but the more one understands their meaning, the more meaningful their use will be in the liturgy. We Catholics are invited to undergo a process of theological reflection and/or use the practice of *lectio divina* with the texts of the new Roman Missal. Praying with these words will help us all to open our hearts to the mysteries they express.

The second approach is to recommit to a prayerful, vibrant celebration of the liturgy. In his encyclical

#### ON THE WEB

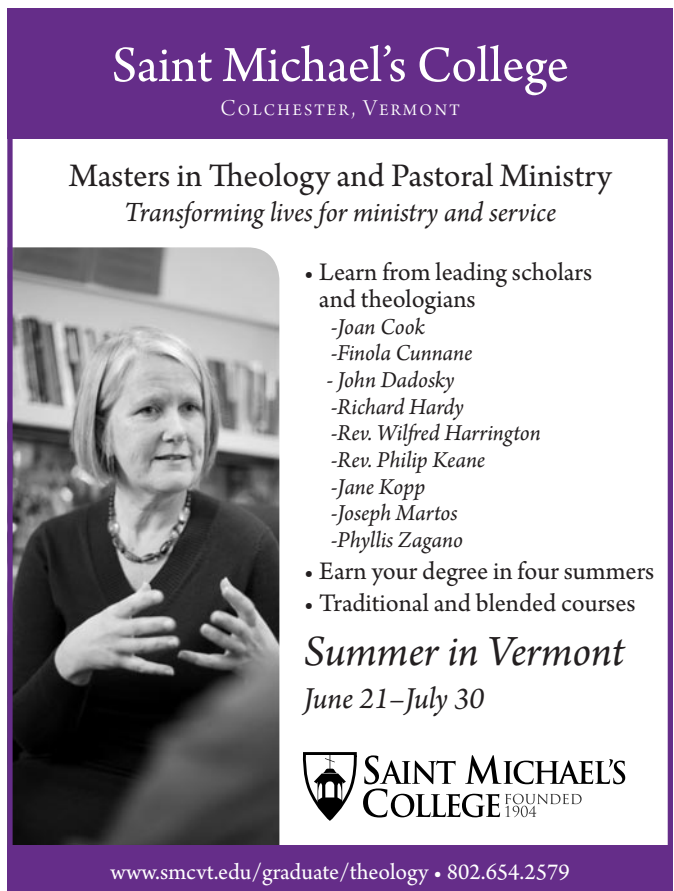
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“Sacramentum Caritatis,” Pope Benedict XVI has encouraged all to celebrate the liturgy effectively and faithfully; he emphasizes the art of proper celebration.

Third, attend to the process of catechesis in preparation for the reception of the new text. The Committee on Divine Worship suggests a two-part process: remote and proximate. Currently we are in the remote stage of preparation, which will last until the confirmation of the text is given. This period should include general liturgical catechesis: the nature and aim of the liturgy, the meaning of “full, conscious and active participation” and the background of the Roman Missal. The proximate preparation will begin after the confirmation is received. It will last 12 to 18 months and will look specifically at particular texts of the missal, preparing pastors and the faithful to celebrate the liturgy using those texts.

The fathers of Vatican II were aware of the need for liturgical catechesis as an essential aspect of liturgical reform (SC, No. 19):

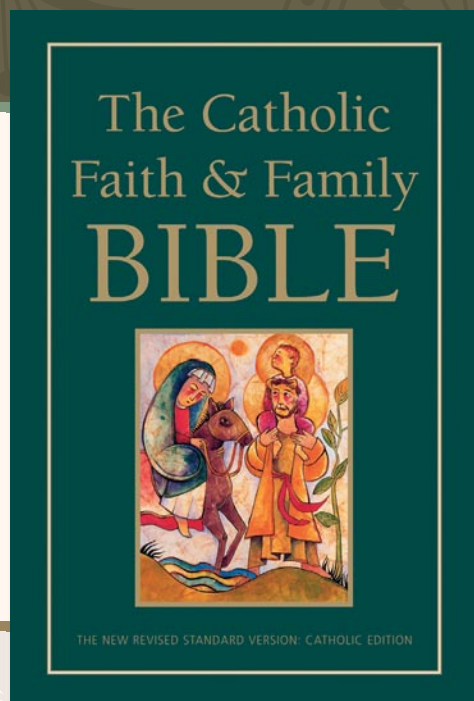
With zeal and patience pastors must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation in the Liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and their stage of religious development. By doing so, pastors will be fulfilling one of

their chief duties as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God; and in this matter they must lead their flock not only by word but also by example.

A wide range of resources is being developed by the U.S.C.C.B., the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and catechetical and liturgical publishers. Representatives of English-speaking countries are producing an international multimedia resource. Last year the Committee on Divine Worship launched a Web site to serve as a central hub of information regarding the new missal ([www.usccb.org/romanmissal](http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal)). We hope it will encourage the development of more resources for use in parishes, schools and homes.

On the 25th anniversary of “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” Pope John Paul II encouraged the church “to renew that spirit which inspired the church at the moment when the Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium was...promulgated.” As the church prepares to receive the third edition of the Roman Missal, we bishops recognize the significance of this moment as an opportunity for genuine renewal of the council’s vision. We hope pastors and the faithful will join us in seizing this opportunity with enthusiasm, finding it, in the words of Pope John Paul II, “a moment to sink our roots deeper into the soil of tradition handed on in the Roman rite.” **A**

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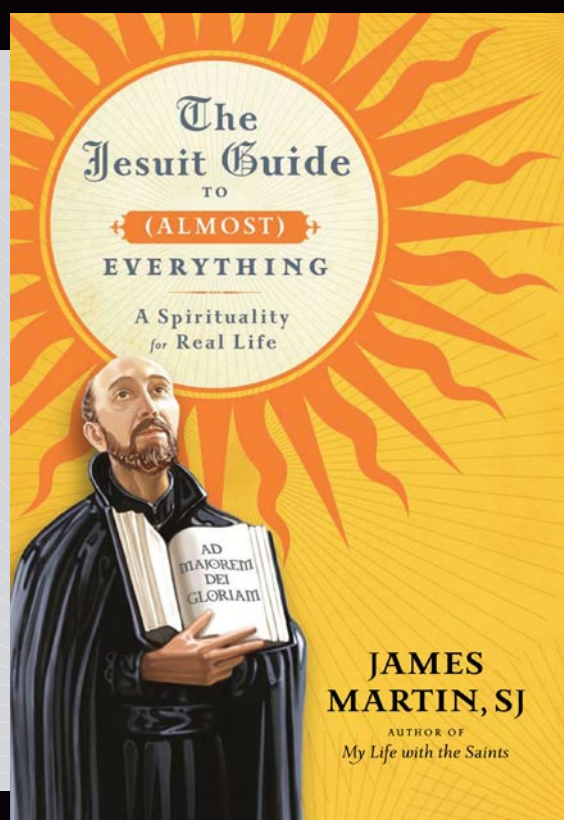
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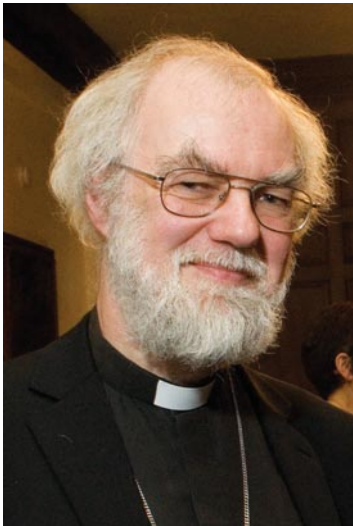
# Pardon Is the Word

Shakespeare, Edmund Campion and the grace of forgiveness

BY ROWAN WILLIAMS

On Jan. 25, the 470th anniversary of the birth of St. Edmund Campion, the editors of *America* presented Dr. Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, with the 2009 Campion Award for distinguished achievement in Christian letters. The archbishop was honored for his writings in theology, apologetics, literary and cultural criticism, poetry and translation. In his introductory remarks, Drew Christiansen, S.J., editor in chief of *America*, noted that the archbishop's writing "has heightened readers' receptivity to transcendence, opened their minds to revelation and diagnosed the spiritual ills that debilitate our post-Christian culture."

Honoring the leading Anglican primate with an award named for a Jesuit martyr of the English Reformation, Father Christiansen remarked, was an act of "martyrial ecumenism" in the spirit of the late Pope John Paul II, for whom the Christian witness of Protestant and Catholic martyrs shows "the path to [church] unity." In his acceptance, Archbishop Williams commented that "martyrdom is an affirmation of profound witness about the depths of human possibility in the face of what can in some circumstances seem like fathomless evil." The archbishop went on to identify pardon, reconciliation and hope as "the proper contribution of Christians to culture and politics and ecumenism."



The Editors

To be here today is for me an enormous delight and a quite unexpected honor; and my first task is simply to say, from my heart, a very warmest thank you to *America* magazine, to the Jesuits, to you who have welcomed me here today. Thank you for this act of ecumenical generosity and fellowship.

You've already heard the words "martyrial ecumenism," and what they express is, to me, something utterly essential about the life of the Christian Church. From the moment when St. Paul recognized in Jesus the face of his victims, it has been a deep dimension of Christian holiness: to be able to go to one's brothers and sisters in repentance and receive

from those whom we have offended or excluded the grace of God's welcome. When our churches learn to celebrate fully and gladly each other's martyrs—as they have begun to do—then that moment of Paul's conversion comes alive again. And since today is indeed the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, little could be more appropriate than that meditation for our thoughts.

Some years ago I was visiting Uganda and was taken to the impressive church that marks the site of the deaths of the first Roman Catholic martyrs in Uganda in the 19th century—the altar there standing on the very spot where one of them was burnt to death. I visited there as an Anglican pilgrim but, rashly, wearing my clerical dress. And when a large number of African schoolchildren flocked into the church there, the priest who was showing me around turned to me casually and said, "I'm sure you'd like to say a few words to the children" (words which many clergy have learned to dread!). But for me it was a moment of martyrial ecumenism. It was a gift to be able, in that unforgettable place, to celebrate the martyrs of a sister church, knowing that the crucified Christ for whom they died was not the possession of any one institution or community, but the possession of God the Father and shared with the world.

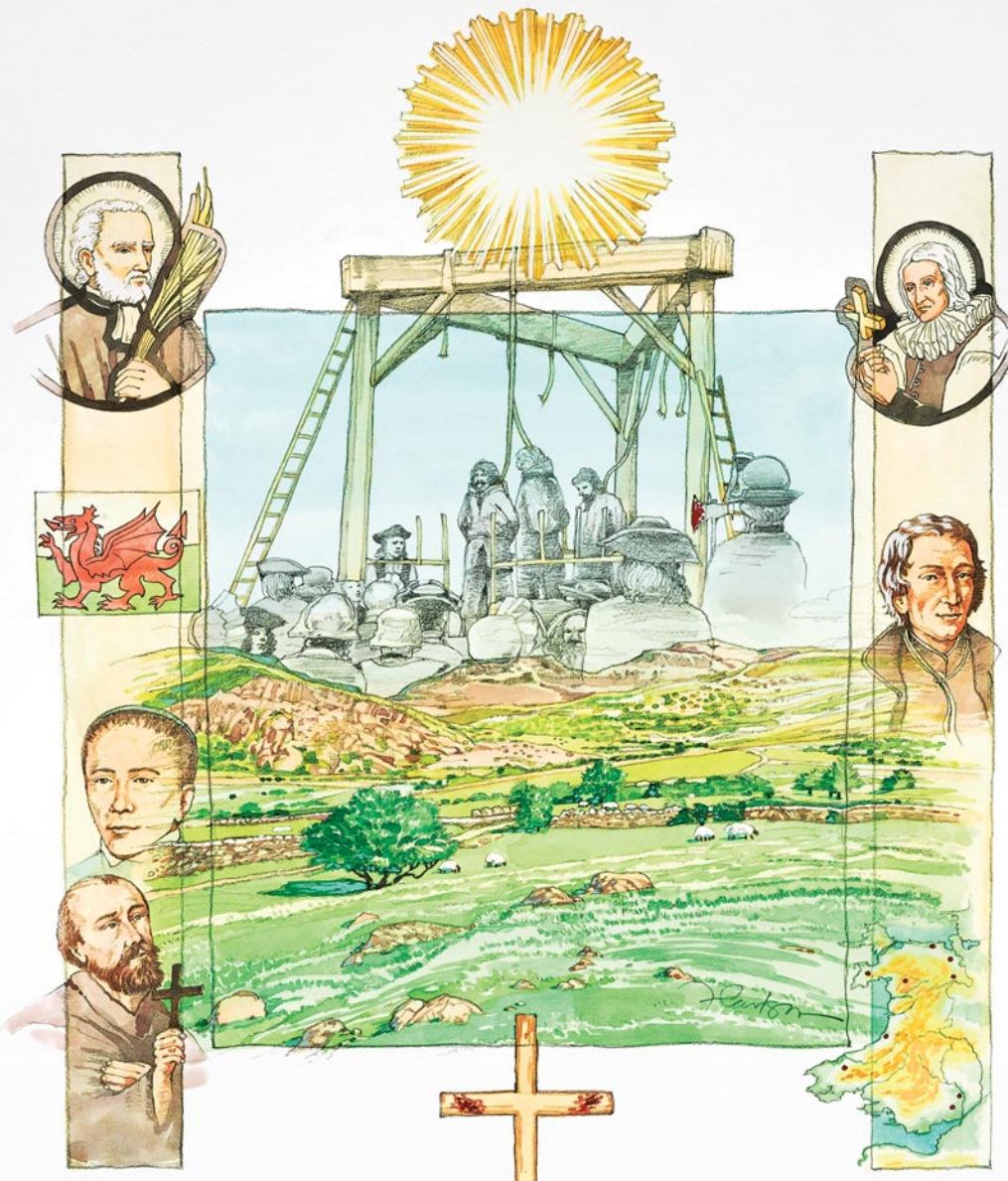
## The Jesuit and the Bard

Edmund Campion has a very particular role in my own interests, since I have long been fascinated by the theory that William Shakespeare, as a young man, spent a few months in the household of a Roman Catholic aristocrat in Lancashire, which was visited at exactly the same time by Edmund Campion, between 1580 and 1581. We know that Campion was traveling in Lancashire and spent some time at Houghton Hall. And we know that among the servants at Houghton Hall at that time was a man named William Shakeshafte. Twentieth-century scholars developed the theory that the young Shakespeare had been shipped off north to learn the trade of school-mastering at a time when his

presence in the Midlands was embarrassing for various reasons. I don't know whether this is true or not, and of course the great thing is that none of us ever will. (It's one of the wonderful things about academic theories, as many of you in this room will be well aware.) But I have more than once reflected on the conversations that might have taken place between the young Shakespeare and the middle-aged Jesuit on his way to martyrdom.

Shakespeare was somebody who constantly wanted to affirm to the world that there was more in humanity than anyone might have suspected. "Is man no more than this?" asks King Lear. Shakespeare's imaginative vision is in effect a protracted no to that question. Humanity is never just this or that. Humanity has possibilities, lured and shaped by grace, which are endless, fathomless, mysterious and terrible—for good and evil. The one thing we can never say about humanity is that now we know all we need to.

I like to think that the priest on his way to martyrdom may very well have sown a seed there. Martyrdom is excessive, extravagant and foolish. Martyrdom is an affirmation of profound witness about the depths of human possibility in the face of what can in some circumstances seem like fathomless evil. Martyrdom affirms that there is something worth dying for, and it is the grace, the love, the infinite compassion of God. If Shakespeare was a Roman Catholic, he was almost certainly a very bad Roman Catholic. And indeed if he was an Anglican, he was almost certainly a very bad Anglican, too! Like many people in that era, he was, I am sure, at best confused in his religious allegiances. But something of that radical, catholic, orthodox, reformed vision—of the fathomlessness of grace finally proving itself deeper than the depth of human rebellion and evil—pervades his plays, more and more indeed as he grows older.



**Left, top to bottom: St. John Kemble, and young and old St. John Roberts. Center: Tyburn Gallows outside London, where some of the martyrs were executed. Right, top to bottom: St. John Wall, St. David Lewis.**

**Bottom right: a map of Wales, where arrests and persecutions took place. This painting is inspired by the poem "After Silent Centuries: For the Catholic Martyrs of Wales," translated from Welsh by Rowan Williams.**

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 Pictures, transcripts and audio clips from the Campion Award ceremony.  
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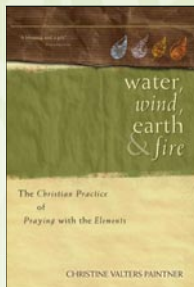
It's in one of his last plays that you hear that extraordinary Christian clarion call, "Pardon's the word to all." And that takes us right back to martyrial ecumenism. Martyrdom is one form of Christian "excess," one affirmation of the dignity and glory, the apocalypse of glory, which can be uncovered in the human face. But so is forgiveness. A functional, reductive account of human relationships is never able to cope with forgiveness, radical grace, the new creation that is God's restoration after sin and failure.

And so, if the answer to the question, "Is man no more than this?" (forgive the sexist language of the era) is "No,

ART: FREDERICK H. CARLSON



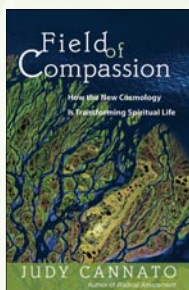
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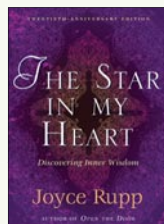


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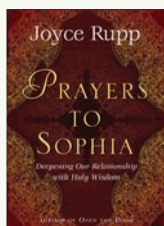


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humanity is more than that,” then the capacity for martyrdom is simply one aspect of that immense capacity for self-giving, of which forgiveness itself is the form available to each and every one of us: that vast range of capacity for self-giving, which is the image of God in us. And when we as Christian believers try to engage with the society around us, with the culture, the politics, the economics of our age, what we seek to do is not simply to lay before that culture a set of propositions about God. It is to uncover before that culture the depths of human possibility: to say that humanity is more than this, this and this; to say that self-giving in death and sacrifice is possible for human beings; to say that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible for human beings.

A few months ago I was visiting Japan, and in preparation for that visit I read some of what the late Father Pedro Arrupe had written about his experiences in Japan at the time of the dropping of the bombs in 1945. And as I read, I began to understand more and more deeply how someone formed in the Jesuit tradition that was Campion’s could see into the heart, into the depths of evil, and yet see beyond. In the face of unspeakable inhumanities, Pedro Arrupe was able to witness to the humanism, the depth of hope, which is the proper contribution of Christians to culture and politics and ecumenism.

I believe the first recipient of this award was Jacques Maritain. Maritain, whom again I count as a great intellectual and spiritual influence, wrote a well-known book under the title of *Integral Humanism*, and that does seem to be finally what we are reflecting about today: humanism that is integral because it refuses to ignore the depths of possibility in humanity, for evil and for good; a humanism that is integral as it sees the capacity for human beings to be integrated, drawn together in themselves by that fathomless love and forgiveness of God.

And so, in very gratefully and humbly accepting this generous award, I would want to join with you all in celebrating the fact that “pardon’s the word to all,” the fact that man and woman are more than this or that, and the fact that in our hearts God has placed his image, which means the capacity for reconciliation and the capacity for utter and radical gift. That gift, that compassion, that readiness for risk, we love and acknowledge and celebrate in saints like Edmund Campion. We celebrate it too in geniuses like William Shakespeare, or Shakeshafte. We celebrate it in the lives of people we have all been privileged to know, many of the brethren of the Society [of Jesus] in our own age, of course, who have given their lives in various ways for this vision. And I end simply by expressing my abiding and daily hope and prayer that we may find more and more ways—through “martyrial ecumenism” and other kinds of fellowship—to draw together in celebrating God’s gift and God’s purpose as we celebrate God’s saints. **A**



# Haiti's Resilient Faith

BY MARGARITA A. MOONEY

**A**s I grieved over the recent earthquake victims in Haiti, many friends who know of my close personal ties to that country sought to console me. Those ties began in 2001, when as an idealistic graduate student of sociology I undertook a dissertation project that compared how the Catholic Church assists Haitian immigrants in three cities of the Haitian diaspora: Miami, Montreal and Paris. For this research, I traveled twice to Haiti, learned French and Haitian Creole and conducted more than 140 interviews in Haiti and in the three cities.

Knowing of Haiti's poverty and the difficulty many Haitian immigrants face in obtaining legal papers, finding jobs and raising children outside Haiti, I focused my attention on the social service programs of the Catholic Church.

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**MARGARITA A. MOONEY**, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is the author of *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora* (Univ. of California Press, 2009).

In all three sites, particularly in Miami, the church actively promotes legal rights for Haitians, provides them with social services and participates in community organizing. I was especially interested in the role of religion and the place of faith in these programs.

After months of observing religious services in Haiti and the diaspora, I learned much about faith as resilience—that is, as an ability to renew communities from within, to build solidarity and identity.

An understanding of faith as resilience goes beyond most recent journalistic reporting about Haiti, which depicts faith as a way of coping with suffering. The materially poor do frequently have abiding trust in God's goodness. Yet their faith does not offer an escape from it. Rather it gives comfort and the means by which they can endure and transform it.

More than a drug (Karl Marx's "opium of the people") to ease suffering, faith is a proper, vital response to an imperfect social and physical world. Faith has the power to give

PHOTO: CNS PHOTO/TOMAS BRAVO, REUTERS

**Haitians offer prayers during a religious service held outside a displacement camp in Port-au-Prince on Jan. 24.**



meaning to suffering and to motivate people to ameliorate their situation. The Christian faith acknowledges the inevitability of some human suffering; God became incarnate in Jesus, who was crucified—an unspeakable experience of suffering. But Christianity also proclaims Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Participation in religious rituals and sharing in the Eucharist renews Christian communities from within. Prayer, for example, is a powerful tool that encourages people to envision a better world and gives them the hope and energy to pursue it. Many Haitians have told me they understand prayer as an obligation to praise God, as a way of helping others and as a source of strength to continue the long struggle toward building a better world. Gathering to sing hymns of praise to God, to ask for forgiveness and to proclaim God's goodness sustains individuals and helps them see themselves not only as victims, but as actors and participants.

#### ON THE WEB

Brian J. Stevens on the need for local expertise in Haiti.  
americamagazine.org

### The Suffering Close By

I had to rush home from my first trip to Haiti because my father fell critically ill. He died within weeks. A few months later, still grieving, I moved to the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami to conduct research. When I mentioned the recent death of my father, Haitians responded so compas-

sionately that I felt great consolation. Those I interviewed explained how they had never lost hope despite suffering violence, poverty and the deaths of loved ones. Their strong community solidarity and their stories of hope helped me to heal and gave me a deeper understanding of suffering. Being among Haitians led me to recognize a kind of spiritual poverty among many people in the United States—a profound loneliness and lack of meaning.

Some who have witnessed the suffering in Haiti after the recent earthquake are prompted to donate money or travel to Haiti to help, which are noble responses. But can witnessing such disasters also lead people to change how they live at home? Is it possible to learn important lessons from the Haitians, from their example of resilience? Will these lessons help us to confront suffering even closer to us?

Several friends have told me, for example, that even though they interact with people all day long at work, they seldom engage in a meaningful conversation with

anyone. Sociological data show that in wealthy nations more and more people are eating their meals alone, living alone and reporting feelings of uselessness and depression. Have cultural ideas about the value of independence and autonomy gone too far?

A proper Christian understanding of suffering empha-

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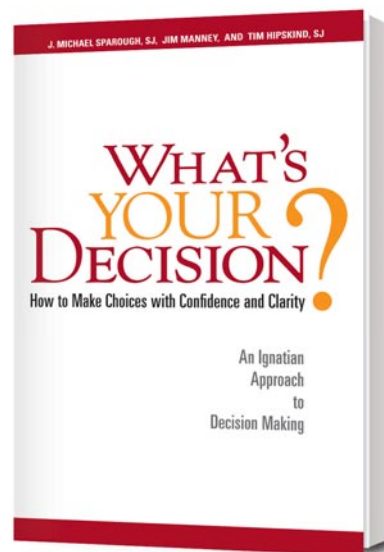
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sizes communion with others as a remedy for both material poverty and loneliness. Christian solidarity extends beyond the sharing of material goods to include a sharing of ourselves and our time—a scarce resource among hard-working people in wealthy countries. Christians have a duty to relieve suffering, like that in Haiti. But that duty is only part of the picture. Suffering is a reminder that humans are fundamentally dependent on one another, not just for material necessities but also for psychological and spiritual necessities. Although many live in isolation, humans are made to live in community.

## Recognizing the Agency of the Poor

Working among Haitians has taught me that no matter how reduced a person's material circumstances, every individual and community is able to contribute to the building of a better, more just world. Social projects ought to outgrow a paternalistic attitude, by which one group comes to the aid of another; givers help takers. People of faith recognize the dignity and integrity of those who suffer, see their faith and the strength of it in adversity and appreciate what it has to teach others who are not suffering at the moment. In this view, there is mutuality and equality: both parties are givers and takers.

An e-mail message I received in January 2010 from Mario Serrano, S.J., who works in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti, illustrates how people in desperate circumstances can be quickly transformed from passive recipients into agents. After the earthquake, Father Serrano quickly gathered emergency supplies and drove them from the Dominican Republic to Haiti in a caravan. The military provided protection on the journey, and they arrived safely at night. The next day, however, neighborhood residents threatened to disrupt the relief efforts. Father Serrano was terrified when a mob pounded on the door demanding help. Even after they contacted the police, the people outside refused to leave and kept angrily calling out for food and water. The crowd finally dispersed when Father Serrano gave everyone a bottle of water and promised to meet with them to discuss how the aid would be distributed.

That afternoon, he met with neighborhood residents and humbly confessed that their angry behavior frightened him. If he could organize his distribution center first, he explained, he would then be in a better position to assist them and many others. Most important, he pleaded for their cooperation in carrying out his mission. Once the group understood both that the people would receive emergency relief and that their cooperation was indispensable to the operation's success, they helped Father Serrano unload the trucks and provided security as he oversaw the distribution of what he had brought. Elated at this turn of events, Father Serrano wrote: "Now we have stronger security and

protection than what the army can give us. We have the active participation of the same people we came here to help."

Even persons experienced in working with the poor and trying to empower them need to be reminded from time to time that those who hunger, thirst and have no home can—no, must—contribute to the relief effort and also to those who assist them.

The Haitian people continue to need assistance as do we who would help them. Can we learn from their faith as resilience how to let suffering make us more human? Can we live in communion with the others right next to us? **A**

## Homage to St. Seamus

*"I rhyme to see myself, to set the darkness echoing."*

Seamus Heaney

For years I've knelt at your holy wells  
and envied the cut of your clean-edged song,  
lay down in the bog where dead men dwell,  
grieved with ghosts who told their wrongs.

Your consonants cleave my soft palate.  
I taste their music and savor it long  
past the last line of the taut sonnet,  
its rhyming subtle, its accent strong.

And every poem speaks a sacrament,  
blood of blessing, bread of the word,  
feeding me full in language ancient  
as Aran's rock and St. Kevin's birds.

English will never be the same.

To make it ours is why you came.

ANGELA O'DONNELL

ANGELA O'DONNELL is a professor of English and associate director of the Curran Center for American Studies at Fordham University in New York City.



# Ward Healer

The spiritual exercises of a hospital chaplain

BY AARON BILLER

When one thinks of a hospital and an 84-year-old woman, one doesn't think of a tiny nun rising daily at 3:20 a.m., trekking by subway to arrive at 4:45 a.m. for her shift as a pre-op chaplain at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Many people Sister Elaine Goodell's age use walkers, but Sister Elaine runs from room to room, providing what one patient calls "spiritual bodybuilding" to hundreds of patients annually of all ages and faiths—and nonbelievers, too.

For Sister Elaine, multifaith hospital chaplaincy is a fourth career. In her previous "acts" in life she has been a nurse, a convent-based nun and a college professor of music. She joined the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Aberdeen, S.D., in 1944.

"I'm inspired by Dt 12:18, where Moses was directing the people to Canaan and their new home," says Sister Elaine. "He said, 'You are to rejoice before the Lord your God in everything you put your hand to.'"

"When I was in South Dakota I tried to rejoice; but in the back of my mind, I felt I didn't really belong there," she says. After many years at the convent, she took a sabbatical with a clinical pastoral education residency program in Houston and earned credentials as a board-certified chaplain.

Then she made a bold move in

1985, at age 60. With her belongings in the trunk of her car and a man's hat strategically positioned in the rear window, she acted on her "hankering for hospital work" and a vision of living in the Big Apple. The Reeder, N.D., native drove to Manhattan. Sister Elaine initially stayed with one of her sisters in the Bronx. (She has nine younger siblings.) After a quick break—a trip to Atlantic City—her sister gave her a Manhattan phone book to search for her new career.

"I sent my résumé to John and Carolyn Twiname, who then ran HealthCare Chaplaincy," explains Sister Elaine. "A few days later, I called Rev. Twiname. He said he was looking at my résumé right at that moment and asked me to come in to interview with the Rev. George Handzo, who directed the chaplaincy department at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. He said they were looking for a priest to be a staff chaplain, but maybe a nun would do."

Rev. Handzo, today vice president for pastoral care leadership and practice for HealthCare Chaplaincy, recalls the interview: "I still have in my mind the day I stood on the sidewalk after meeting with this little 60-year-old nun whom we had just interviewed for our new staff chaplain position. I had just given her the speech about how we were interviewing several people and would get back to her. She looked me straight in the eye and said to me, 'Well, I'm the person you want and if you hire me, you'll never regret it.' How right she was."

## An Ability to Connect

HealthCare Chaplaincy and the 12 health care institutions for which it manages professional chaplaincy services present an annual Wholeness of Life Award to one person from each institution who "with a purity of devotion selflessly cares for others... simply because it is what compassionate people do." In 2009, Memorial Sloan-Kettering selected Sister Elaine as its honoree.

"I wondered if the work at a cancer hospital would be depressing," says Sister Elaine. "It was not. I found such a warm spirit there. The staff works so well together. Coming to New York, I knew after a few weeks that I had found my niche. HealthCare Chaplaincy and Memorial Sloan-Kettering are really the best."

New York held another surprise: "New Yorkers are so blunt," she says. "In South Dakota, people never confront. My heavens, how people speak to each other here!"

Sister Elaine's colleagues and the thousands of people she has helped would agree that her greatest talent is her ability to connect with people. Her first stop each morning before dawn is to check the operating room so she knows who is going into surgery. "It's all in how you introduce yourself. I want them to know that I'm here for them at this crucial time in their lives. No pressure. I say, 'If you would like me to say a prayer for you and your surgeons, I'll be glad to do that.' Rarely does someone refuse, and they're grateful."

Sister Elaine is a humble woman, but when asked about instances when she has helped people, she shared a letter:

This note comes with heartfelt thanks for your gracious prayers and kindnesses. You came at a moment when I and my family sat in fearful silence before my operation and brought with you an anchor for our unguided spir-

AARON BILLER is a freelance writer based in New York.

its at the very moment we needed that solace. I thank my doctors and the nurses who cared for me, but my greater obligation is to you and your chaplaincy for that healing no physical act can provide. It gave me courage, reawakened my mind and soul to the Lord's hand in this effort and left me with the strength to reflect without anger or bitterness. Your work merits more recognition and gratitude than you realize.

### Patient Listening

"Patients, nurses and chaplains have ranked talking and listening as the number one spiritual intervention and need," says Sister Elaine. "How fortunate for chaplains to have 'listening' as their profession and to enable another's story to be spoken and shared."

"Listening is a lost art. Listening to a patient is what keeps me going at age 84. You can see the difference that true listening makes."

"Elaine has told me, 'When you notice I'm no longer effective, please tell me, and then I'll retire,'" says Walter J. Smith, S.J., president and chief executive officer of HealthCare Chaplaincy. He says: "Elaine is compassionate, fearless and will find the resources to help. More than once she's called me at home at night with a request: 'Walter, it's Elaine. I've got a patient with a sensitive case and you must come tomorrow morning to help him.' Of course, I go."

"There was another case 10 years ago," recalls Father Smith. "A Russian-born woman with terminal cancer wished to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. I baptized her. When she died, her funeral service was held not in a church but at a funeral home on the Lower East Side. Elaine called me and said, 'Walter, we've got to go to the funeral. She has a small family, and we need to give them support.' Of course, we went."

Elaine tells the story about the end

of a visit with a young man in his 20s and his mother and sister on the evening before surgery.

"I asked if he would like a prayer for him, the family, his surgeon and the team. His mother and sister immediately said, 'Oh, yes!' But the patient reached over to the nightstand, picked up a polished stone and said, 'This is my support!' I acknowledged his com-



fort zone, commenting on the stone's beauty, and then continued, 'No pressure on you, but if you wish, I can add a prayer.' He looked at his mother and sister and said, 'I guess it won't hurt.' I told him that was the one and only guarantee I could give him. When I finished, silence ensued. Then he abruptly leaped out of bed, hugged me so tightly I could not move and said, 'That prayer was exactly what I needed!'"

As Sister Elaine explains it, "Prayer brings an underlying sense of peace and comfort. For me, prayer is a powerful force, energizer, bridge, reflector or sign. I think prayer can enlighten, enliven, inform, gratify, teach, enable and enlarge the world of the patient in our care. On the other hand, we must watch that it not be a crutch or substitute for genuine visiting or sharing."

### Spiritual Bodybuilder

Sister Elaine recalls a young man who had osteogenic sarcoma, one of the

most common forms of bone cancer in children. "Through years of admissions, chemo and continued infections, amputation of the leg was suggested to ease his suffering and to promote his healing." The evening before his surgery, he shared his ambivalence about surgery. He knew he had the support of his surgeon whatever his decision. "Wanting advice which I could not give him, we said a prayer. I then remarked, 'After a good sleep tonight, you will know exactly what you should do.'

"The next morning I ran up to his room to see him. He joyously said, 'I have cancelled the surgery with 100 percent support from my surgeon.'

"Today he is a lawyer, married, and has two sons," reports Sister Elaine. "He called me his 'spiritual bodybuilder.' He said that the counseling, conversation and just the company and my insisting that he would get out of the hospital aided his healing."

Not all of Sister Elaine's recollections are happy ones.

"A surgeon once cornered me in a hospital and said, 'Sister, I want you to know that I have never had any feelings for my patients—never.' Then he said, 'What shall I do?' We visited about this, and I gave him some simple tips for social interactions. Periodically I began to hear how caring and compassionate this doctor was! A few years ago he insisted on accompanying a very ill patient 200 miles south of his hospital in a helicopter," Sister Elaine remembers. "There was a sudden blizzard and all were killed."

Sister Elaine draws inspiration from the late cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, who wrote: "If I were asked for the most striking insight into human nature and the human condition, it would be this: No person is strong enough to support the meaning of his or her life unaided by something or someone outside of himself." Says Sister Elaine, "Hopefully, I have been that someone." **A**

# The Quiet Space

Between the lines of the Our Father

BY DAVID BERRY

In rugged mountains east of Seoul, Korea, in forests marked by wild streams, the footpaths of hardy hikers and the rooting spots of wild boar, Nature and Star Lodge nestles at the end of a road up a steep valley.

At a weekend retreat I led there, under images of galaxies and stars projected on a high ceiling, the retreatants and I paused to feel Earth's gravity pull us into our seats with a sense of awe arising as we found ourselves in the midst of the miraculous universe. The participants included a priest, a nun and Koreans with Italian Christian names like Angelo and Maria, a custom in Korean churches. Mr. Kim, the founder and owner of Nature and Star Lodge, was also among us. He is a quiet, intuitive man sought out for counsel by friends and parishioners.

It was early December, so I included Christmas carols in the retreat program to encourage expression from throats and diaphragms as well as hearts and minds. Often a familiar practice or text, like a carol, offers a gateway to deeper feelings and perceptions.

The retreat was going well, but the people still seemed in a more intellectual frame of mind, perhaps because following my English and elementary Korean and then listening to a professional translator was primarily an intellectual exercise.

Nearing the end of our time together one day, as people shared with each



other in pairs, I prayed quietly that we could deepen the experience and that participants would find a practice of prayer that would make a difference to them after the retreat. An idea came to me, reminiscent of a practice I encountered in a Jesuit retreat: to work with the most familiar practice of all. Calling the room back to order I invited them to share highlights of the previous exercise and then asked, "Who here has said the Our Father at least 1,000 times?"

The nun looked around the room and then back at me as if I had asked a foolish question, "Everyone," she said.

"Ten thousand times?" I asked.

They looked around at one another, all nodding, "Yes, everyone."

"One hundred thousand times?"

"Most, yes maybe all of us."

I looked slowly at each face then asked, "Did you pray like this? Our father, who art in heaven, *I have got to start supper before the kids get home*, Hallowed be thy name, *I hope I get this sales contract*, Thy kingdom come, *I wonder what time it is....*"

They first looked surprised, then nudged one another, smiling in recognition.

"Do you think Jesus had something in mind when he gave us that particular prayer?" I asked. "Perhaps he is encouraging us to turn our attention in a different direction to realize something we did not previously notice. Perhaps Jesus gave us a key. But do we ever pause to wonder what that key is designed to open? Are we focused on the key or on the door?"

As interest sparked, I invited them to put themselves into a prayerful state and, when someone felt ready, to say slowly the first line of the Our Father in Korean. I suggested they listen to the phrase and rest in contemplation. Why would Christ ask us to say those words? After a few moments, when another person felt moved to speak, they should slowly say the next line of the prayer. Again we would remain silent for three breaths and consider the phrase.

As they entered silence and the priest said the first line, I began to pray an Our Father silently in English. The pauses they left between the lines were longer than I expected; the phrases of the familiar prayer were spoken in earnest and with focused attention. When the prayer was over, the intellectual frame had given way to


DAVID BERRY is a consultant and speaker on sustainability who lives in Virginia.



a feeling of well-being and deep connection. We sat quietly for a few minutes reflecting on what had happened and then took a short break. The workshop closed at the appointed time an hour later.

A few days later, Mr. Kim told a participant that after the retreat, in a building he had erected with his own hands but in which for years he had a sense of the “energy not being right,” something had shifted. He had a peaceful feeling there for the first time.

Since that weekend I have often prayed with silent pauses between the lines, and I am still startled by what sometimes happens during one heartfelt Our Father. What each of us finds there differs of course. For me, in the first two words I sometimes hear myself calling out, almost imploring the Lord to be present. Then I realize it is I who am less than fully present. Sometimes the spaces are filled with racing thoughts on unresolved issues. At those times I leave space for a few more slow breaths until the storm settles, until I realize that my prayers are answered by grace and blessings. When I forgive others, I feel a release of the judgments and unhappiness that were hurting me more than anyone else. I don't wish to bring unhappiness to anyone, I realize; if they were happy and aware they would rarely offend others. So I begin to pray for them, too.

More than a year later, while at a Christian service at an interfaith gathering on the National Mall next to the Washington Monument, I invited many participants from diverse traditions to pray one Our Father in that way. The spaces between the lines grew as peace moved through the crowd. Later that morning, a pair of eagles circled above the gathering followed by a rainbow around the sun in an otherwise clear sky. Silence between the lines can smile upon us in many ways. 

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# BOOKS & CULTURE

PORTFOLIO | TERRENCE DEMPSEY

## LENTEN MYSTERIES

*Perspectives on the Passion in contemporary art*

A distraught woman collapses in grief over the news of the deaths of five family members. An image from Haiti? Yes, but she cries out from a work of art entitled “Crucifixion—Haiti,” created in 1997 by Helen David Brancato, I.H.M., in response to a photograph of a woman whose loved ones were among 400 victims of a ferry boat accident in that country. Sister Helen’s scene is painted on scrap wood, as if on wreckage from the sunken boat. In the painting, the woman’s open arms echo Christ’s arms spread on the cross.

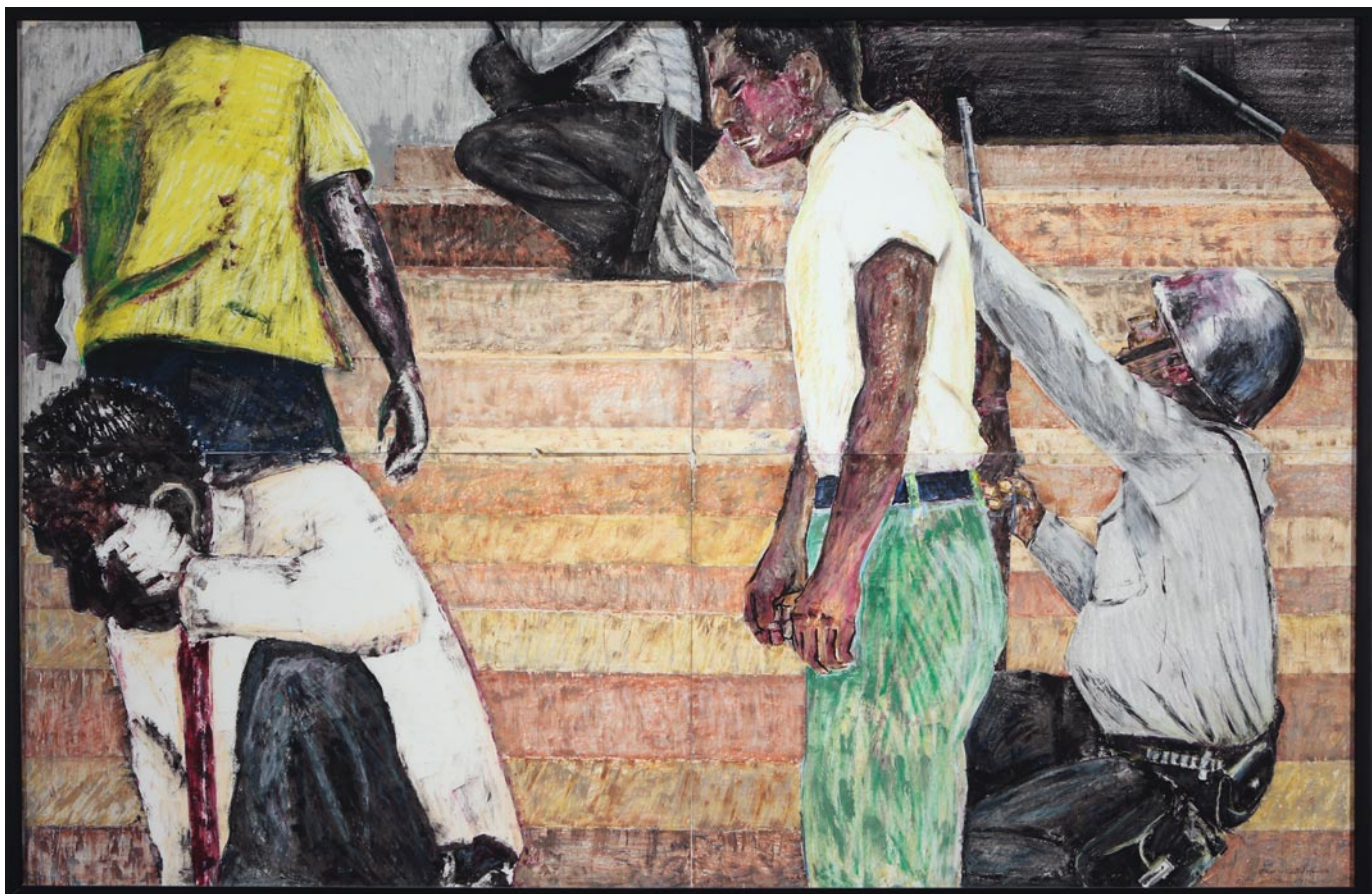
The capacity for art to transcend the particular circumstances of its creation and reinvigorate timeless themes and symbols is key to “Good Friday: The Suffering Christ in Contemporary Art,” a new exhibit now on display at Saint Louis University’s Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, the world’s first interfaith contemporary art museum. This marks an encore presentation of “Good Friday,” first shown in Lent 2009 (full disclosure: I

am the museum’s director). The exhibition brings together works by 31 artists from diverse religious backgrounds, all from the museum’s collection or on long-term loan. These artists refer to the suffering Christ—some to address matters of faith, others to address significant social issues or more personal experiences of loss or suffering. Their works testify to the

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power of the image of the suffering Christ even in our multicultural world.

Given its mission, the museum sought to invite visitors to approach the works as doorways to prayer, to make art a part of their Lenten experience through active engagement of their imaginations—a hallmark of the Ignatian



DOUGLAS DEPICE, “JESUS IN CENTRAL AMERICA—THE FIRST STATION OF THE CROSS,” 1987. OIL, PASTEL ON PAPER. COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS ART. PHOTO: JEFFREY VAUGHN.



method of contemplation. The museum also ventured beyond the typical docent-guided exhibition tour. A booklet offered to visitors follows the exhibition's thematic structure, which groups the works according to key moments of the Passion. The booklet also provides relevant passages from Scripture and questions for reflection. Undergraduate and graduate theology classes, members of the faculty and staff and area parishioners are among the many groups for whom "Good Friday" has opened another path to prayer, in which images can play an important role.

Among the works in "Good Friday" that consistently draw visitors into reflection is "Prayer of the Faithful in Ordinary Time," by Adrian Kellard (1959–91), who reworked a popular image of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane to express the companionship he himself found in Christ when faced with the ordeal of H.I.V./AIDS. By incorporating a ticking clock into the work, Kellard acknowledges the inevitability of human mortality.

Like "Crucifixion—Haiti," other works with specific references reach across the boundaries of time and geography. Douglas DePice's 1987 drawing "Jesus in Central America—The First Station of the Cross" shows a man detained by a soldier in the midst of civil unrest in El Salvador. During a visit by a group of graduate students, both a Methodist minister from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a Nigerian Catholic priest told me that they responded strongly to this work, which recalled encounters with the military in their own countries.

More abstract works also may suggest connections to the Passion, such as "Icon Wall," Craig Antrim's vibrant 64-panel meditation on the cross, or Peter Ambrose's "First Death," a Cubist-inspired sculpture of roughly hewn wood blocks and cast-iron wedges that evokes Jesus' flagellation.



*Alba, Father, all things are possible, to thee remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.*  
 MARK 14:36





Michael David's large inverted cross-shaped painting "Crowning With Thorns" alludes to the Nazi concentration camps but allows viewers to bring their own memories and associations.

"Good Friday" was organized both to explore the enduring power of the image of the suffering Christ for contemporary artists and audiences and to help visitors discover art as a potential gateway to prayer. Like Sister Helen's Haitian crucifixion, many of the works

in the exhibition invite a compassionate response by reaching out to others in need. As Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., notes in a reflection on Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, "The beauty that will save the world is the love that shares the pain."

**TERRENCE DEMPSEY, S.J.**, the founding director of the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, is the May O'Rourke Jay Professor of Art History at Saint Louis University. "Good Friday: The Suffering Christ in Contemporary Art" runs through April 25.

**BOOKS** | ANTHONY D. ANDREASSI

## AFTER PETER

### A HISTORY OF THE POPES From Peter to the Present

By John W. O'Malley, S.J.  
Sheed & Ward. 368p \$26.95

It has been said that church historians keep theologians honest. If this is true, then John W. O'Malley, S.J., has rendered them (and us) an outstanding service, for his book reveals that any

theology of the papacy must be based on a well-grounded and scrupulously honest history of the development of the Petrine office. And in serving up this kind of hard-nosed history of so many saints and sinners, O'Malley surely does not disappoint.

Given the breadth of his topic, O'Malley necessarily maintains a brisk pace but frequently slows down to

dwell on a particularly interesting pope. Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604) receives a whole chapter because of his innovative and effective leadership during a period of almost complete collapse of civil government in Rome. Because of this, O'Malley believes that Gregory may have been the "most successful and respected pope of all times." By contrast, the story of Stephen VI illustrates that the barque of Peter has not always been so ably steered. It was Stephen (896-97) who exhumed the body of his predecessor Formosus for the infamous cadaver trial. Not surprisingly, the corpse did not mount a strong self-defense, so Stephen had the three fingers of its right hand hacked off before throwing the rest of the remains into the Tiber.

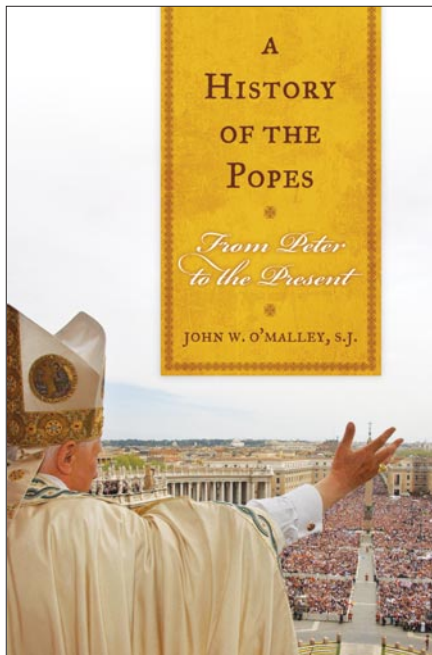
O'Malley includes other relatively small details that are more significant than they might seem at first glance. For example, when John VIII (872-82) heard that Methodius (he and his brother Cyril were the great apostles to the Slavs) was singing the liturgy "in a barbaric tongue," he called him to Rome. After speaking with Methodius, John approved this novel method of evangelization and said: "He who made three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Roman—also made other languages to sing his praise and glory." Unfortunately, 18th-century popes, notably Clement XI (1700-21), seemed blissfully unaware of this precedent when they condemned some of the liturgical innovations made by Jesuit missionaries during the Chinese Rites Controversy in their attempt to evangelize in the Far East.

O'Malley's treatment of the medieval popes is consistently clear and engaging, but he really hits his stride when he reaches the popes of the early modern period, his own area of specialization. He is too honest to conceal the moral bankruptcy of some of the Renaissance popes, but his popes always remain complex human beings

who often embody both the saint and sinner. Take Paul III, for example. As a young man and a cardinal, Alessandro Farnese fathered several illegitimate children, but he eventually experienced a religious conversion and changed his ways. During his pontificate (1534-49), he not only convoked the Council of Trent but he also approved the constitutions of the Jesuits and the Ursulines (one of the earliest groups of active women religious in the church). The founding of groups such as these were surely not Paul's initiative, but as O'Malley points out, Paul certainly "deserves credit for seeing them as helpmates and not as threats." Sometimes the best thing a pope can do is simply not get in the way of the Holy Spirit.

As O'Malley moves toward the modern era, his story becomes even more interesting. Here the reader can appreciate the extent to which the functioning of the papacy today is rooted in the office's history and development during the previous two centuries. Ironically, as the popes lost more and more of their temporal power, they came to claim more religious and ecclesiastical authority. The Code of Canon Law of 1917, for example, gave the pope sole authority to appoint all the bishops of the world. Before this, the nomination process varied greatly and often included many voices. Today some argue that papal authority in this area is rooted in the office's very origins and so is absolute. It is the church historian's job to point out that this has not always been the case.

O'Malley's judgment of the more recent popes is a bit more tentative. And in tying his whole book together, O'Malley reminds his readers that while the papacy may be the oldest living institution in the Western world, its day-to-day functioning in 2010 may owe far more to the Ultramontalist spirit of the 19th century than to the office that Peter and



the early popes once held.

This book does not aim at supplanting lengthier histories. It stands on its own merits as a fine example of

a successful synthesis of a vast and complicated topic. And its publication is just one more reason O'Malley rightly deserves the title of dean of American Catholic church historians. His ability to synthesize a notoriously controversial topic in an authoritative fashion and without polemic recalls the similar ability of the recently deceased Louvain church historian Roger Aubert. O'Malley demonstrated a similar gift for lucid and perceptive synthesis in *What Happened at Vatican II*, which enabled the reader to see the forest as well as the trees at the council. With this study, he performs a similar service for the papacy, although some professional Vatican bureaucrats may not appreciate the effort.

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REV. ANTHONY D. ANDREASSI, a priest of the Brooklyn Oratory, holds a doctorate in history and teaches at Regis High School in New York City.

RON HANSEN

## FRIENDSHIP, RIVALRY, REDEMPTION

### UNFINISHED DESIRES

A Novel

By Gail Godwin

Random House. 416p \$26

In 2001, 85-year-old Mother Suzanne Ravenel, of the Order of St. Scholastica, begins an oral history of a Catholic girls' academy in North Carolina, an account that would later be published as *Mount St. Gabriel's Remembered*. She jogs her memory with yearbooks and "scrapbooks covering the years from the school's opening in 1910 to its closing in 1990," but she is also intimately connected with the place, having started there as a seventh-grade boarder in 1929, taken vows as a postulant in her senior year and become headmistress of the academy at the age of 29.

She expresses gratitude in those reflections; she admires the "holy daring" of the order's English foundress, and yet she also guiltily worries over the "toxic year" of 1951-52. That is the year that a beautiful, frail Bostonian, Mother Kate Malloy, joins them in the mile-high altitude of their mountain campus. She would be teaching a ninth-grader named Tildy Stratton, who has jettisoned Maud Norton as a friend because of irregularities in Maud's home life and has accepted into her closest friendship Chloe Starnes, a cousin and new day student now living with her uncle after the sudden death of her mother.

The relationships can be slightly dizzying at first, for as Uncle Henry notes for Chloe, "I hardly see how you can be an outsider [at Mount St.

Gabriel's] when there are so many connections. Mother Ravenel was your Aunt Antonia's best friend. And Antonia's niece Tildy Stratton will be your classmate. Antonia and her twin sister, Cornelia, and your mother were all in the class of thirty-four."

Shifting through time just as memory does, Gail Godwin swiftly develops a host of female characters and two overarching plot lines: one having to do with Antonia and Suzanne discerning a religious vocation with the Order of St. Scholastica when they were seniors, and the other having to do with Headmistress Ravenel's decision to concentrate Tildy's flair and energies in directing "The Red Nun," a play written by Suzy Ravenel when she too was a 14-year-old freshman.

In 1931, "The Red Nun" was a ghostly pageant that depicted the conversion to Catholicism of Elizabeth Wallingford, a sea journey to America with her Irish "fellow adventurer," Fiona Finney, and Mother

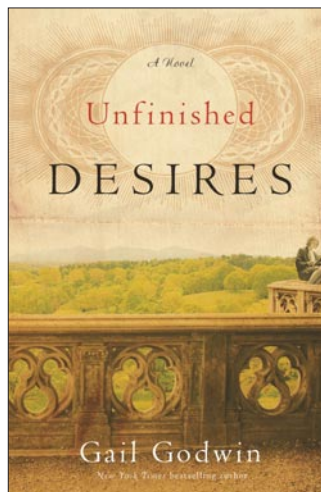
Wallingford's impetuous purchase of a rambling, 80-bedroom Victorian hotel at auction in 1909 in order to create the girl's school. Suzy Ravenel's play ended with the poignant legend of a Caroline DuPree, who sadly died of malaria just before she could enter the novitiate. An unfinished statue of the girl in red Italian marble was the focus of an academy grotto.

But the ending of "The Red Nun" would change in the 1951 performance because Cornelia Stratton, Tildy's mother, resents Mother Ravenel for having been "a pernicious influence" on her twin sister when Antonia and Suzanne were intimates, and she urges her daughter to invent "some sort of breakout from the traditional old party line. Her party line."

As Mother Ravenel puts it in her

oral history, "You could say I offered my play as tinder and threw in the first lit match myself."

To say more would give away too much. Godwin is the celebrated, best-selling author of 12 earlier, critically acclaimed novels, including *The Odd Woman*, *Father Melancholy's Daughter* and the gorgeous *Evenings at Five*. She writes with a 19th-century intricacy of plot, the shrewdness and wit of Muriel Spark in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and a tender, fetching, Southern voice that may owe something to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*. Godwin in fact attended St. Genevieve-of-the-Pines school for girls in Asheville through the ninth



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grade and in her “Acknowledgements” thanks Mother Kathleen Winters, R.C.E., “for fifty years of friendship and spiritual guidance.”

Not the least of the pleasures in *Unfinished Desires* is to read it as a fond remembrance of the hectic melodramas of adolescence and an act of

indebtedness to the graceful, dedicated, soul-searching nuns who themselves were “works in progress” but oversaw those years with such wisdom and love.

---

RON HANSEN's most recent novel is *Exiles*. He teaches at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, Calif.

JOHN C. HAWLEY

## IMAGINARY FRIENDS

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### SUMMERTIME

#### A Novel

By J. M. Coetzee  
Viking. 272p \$25.95

J. M. Coetzee has now published 20 books, among them several fictionalized autobiographies: *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997), *Youth* (2002) and now this one, which covers the 1970s but is presented in our own year, following “John Coetzee’s” recent death, and told through the reminiscences of those who knew him back then. *Boyhood* deals, in third person, with Coetzee’s struggle in the 50s in Cape Town, South Africa, to gain some respect for his father while trying to recover from an overdependence on his mother. *Youth* moves into the 60s, and observes the same imagined character’s move to London and Berkshire, where he tries a desiccating job at a computer company while yearning for a literary life. There his ineptitude at poetry mirrors his nascent love life.

Coetzee published his first novel, *Dusklands*, in 1974, so we might expect that *Summertime* provides him an occasion to reveal the influences and processes that brought it about. Since this author’s forte is reticence, however, we are left to imagine how the ricocheting biographical details that occasionally shoot by the reader of *Summertime* might have resulted in the two violent

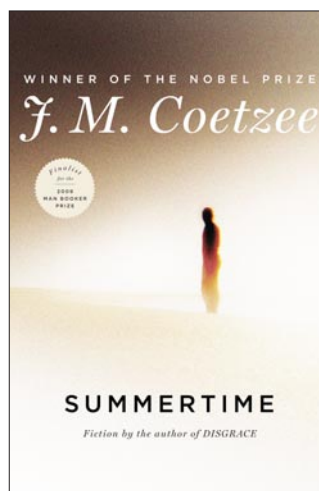
and unrelated stories that make up the first novel: one a tale of the slow descent into insanity of an American agent of psychological warfare during the Vietnam War; the other the story of a Coetzee ancestor who was once nursed back to health by a Namaqua tribe in southern Africa, to whom he later returns and whom he slaughters. By analogy, the stories display the atavism at the heart of colonization and thereby announce the agenda for the rest of Coetzee’s work: typically, a relatively slight tale of a male protagonist uncomfortable with his body, his history, his ambitions and his coterie.

Surprisingly, and in a most roundabout way, one might conclude that *Summertime*’s meandering series of interviews with relatives and former lovers of “John Coetzee” (none of whom appears to mourn his passing) does reveal the perceptions faux intimates may have had of him during the 70s—at least in J. M. Coetzee’s imagination. The book provides a backhanded insight into what Coetzee imagines to have been the influences during his important creative decade, the one that set the stage for all the novels and essays that followed.

And what do the interviewed char-

acters think of this future winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Mann Booker Prize (twice, and a finalist again for *Summertime*)? The women wonder whether he might be homosexual—and if not that, then certainly not a very adroit or expressive lover (“neither rich nor handsome nor appealing....a narrow, myopic kind of cleverness....no sexual presence whatsoever”). Even now, decades after they had played a major role in his life, they are not very impressed with him. But since the author sees fit to include them in John Coetzee’s story, it would appear that he, on the other hand, was impressed with them—for good or ill.

*Summertime* compiles some snippets from 1972 to 1975 in a notebook the



protagonist left behind, plus interviews undertaken by a Mr. Vincent as background for a proposed biography of the famous author. One might not be surprised that the inscrutable Coetzee would take the occasion of his autobiography to write, instead, the biography of others—his aged father, with whom he lives; one of his female cousins; the mother of a young Brazilian girl he tutored in English; a former married colleague at the university where he taught and with whom he had an affair. As an autobiography, this is a postmodern series of points of view—a kind of *Afrikaner Rashomon*—all truncated and filtered through an imaginary biographer. What is gained by this approach, among other things, is a suspension of suspicion on the part of readers who might otherwise look with a jaundiced eye on the autobiographer’s self-understanding. Since the contributors are unsparing in their bleak summaries of Coetzee’s limitations, readers are more likely to jump to the

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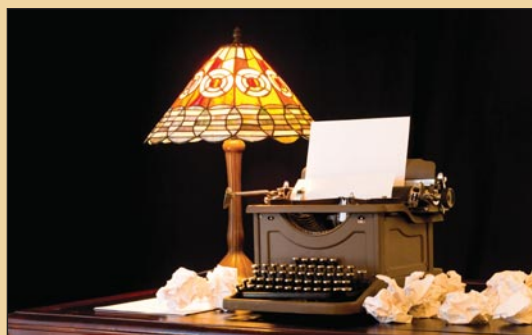
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other side of the equation and mentally defend the famous man against these unfeeling or jealous individuals.

The first entry in the notebook asks the rhetorical question: "Where in the world can one hide where one will not feel soiled?" The answer for J. M. Coetzee would seem to be: between the lines—so see if you can find me. In fact, the central portion of this book, the interviews, might actually serve as a massive displacement of our attention, a plea not to focus on Coetzee but on the lives around him. Thus, while many of those interviewed argue that their lives must hold no particular interest except insofar as they had a relationship with the famous man, J. M. Coetzee seems to feel differently, surrendering the bulk of the book to them and to an account of their lives. But since the bulk of the book is surrendered to them, and since they are J. M. Coetzee's imaginary playthings, the author seems to feel differently.

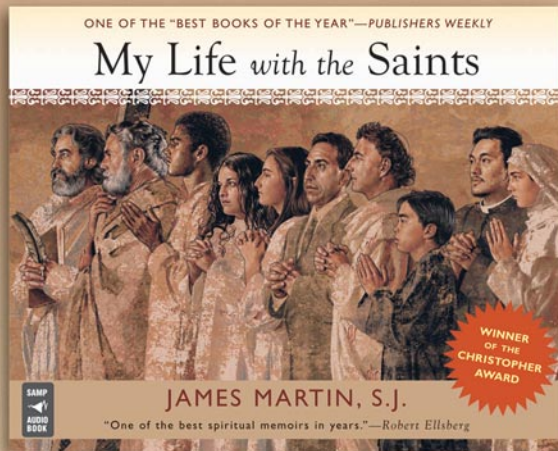
The other bookend, though, is a number of undated notebook fragments, and these obsess over John Coetzee's relationship with his father. Near the novel's end he pleads for forgiveness...

for countless acts of meanness. For the meanness of heart in which those acts originated. In sum, for all I have done since the day I was born, and with such success, to make your life a misery.

The "agenbite of inwit" (prick of conscience) to which he refers in an early notebook entry haunts this novel, as it seems to haunt the body of Coetzee's writing.

The story is not over. There are several decades left for this fascinating chameleon to recreate, but for all his particularity he manages to sound very much like Everyman.

**JOHN C. HAWLEY** is chair of the department of English at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, Calif.



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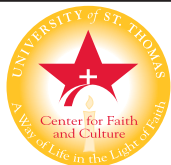
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## LETTERS

### Trillions for Defense

Re “Weakened by Defense” (Editorial, 1/18): I don’t know whether I should smile or cry when I hear the word *trillion* used so glibly in the media today. How much is a trillion dollars? No human being has ever been able to count to a trillion for the simple reason that, if you could say one number every second, it would take you 32,000 years to count to one trillion. To spell it out: There are 3,600 seconds in 1 hour, 86,400 seconds in 1 day, 31,536,000 seconds in 1 year, 31,536,000,000 seconds in 1,000 years, 1,009,152,000,000 seconds in 32,000 years.

LARRY N. LORENZONI, S.D.B.  
*San Francisco, Calif.*

### Slogans and Labels

A magazine with the thoughtful, Christian background of **America** disappoints me by using the pro-life label (Signs of the Times, 2/15). Everyone I know is pro-life; they much prefer life to death, and they abhor the notion of taking life, particularly the life of an infant at any stage of conception or development. Similarly, everyone I know is pro-choice: People should be given as many choices as are possible without preventing or neutralizing the legitimate choices of others.

The abortion debate uses labels to cover the real issue: should terminating the life of a child in the womb be handled in the legal system as a criminal act, or should it be recognized as a painful moral decision to be made in the realm of conscience without state involvement? Such debasing of words and advertising slogans makes it hard for a person of conscience to find sincerity in the discussion.

I expect **America** to impose discipline on its use of language always, especially when a moral issue is being discussed. It is the truth that will set us free, and truth appears only in language carefully and prayerfully used.

We should not allow Madison Avenue to provide us clever labels, even if they put our position in a favorable light or the opponent’s position in an unfavorable one.

PETER CASTALDI  
*Shrewsbury, Mass.*

### Compelling, if Flawed

Re “Guilt Remains” (Web only, 2/22): I, like Maurice Timothy Reidy, was deeply captivated—yet also troubled—by Michael Haneke’s film “The White Ribbon.” It is, one can say, one of the most beautifully photographed films in recent years. Many saw a resemblance to Ingmar Bergman’s great films. At no moment as I watched the film was I anything but mesmerized.

Still, like your reviewer, I felt the lack of redemption, compassion, the other side of our sinfulness. In many ways, the director seems too easily to say, “We all were guilty.” While that may be true in some sense, like the Nuremberg trials, we also need to calculate carefully true metrics or measures of guilt. When all are guilty, somehow we lack the bite for those who are more sinful, more guilty,

beyond the human pale of fault.

I certainly did not come away from this arresting film buoyed with anything like hope, even whispers of it. That may say something about the director’s nihilism. Thanks for the good review of an interesting and compelling, if flawed, film.

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J.  
*San Francisco, Calif.*

### Simply Grateful

All I can say to Kevin Clarke is, thank God those boys have you both as parents (Of Many Things, 2/15). Thank you for sharing your personal story in a wonderful article.

ANN O’DONAGHUE  
*New York, N.Y.*

### The Real Greensboro Four

Re “Saving a Lunch Counter” (Current Comment, 2/15):

I am a longtime reader who eagerly awaits each new issue of **America**. I was pleased to see your coverage of the opening on Feb. 1 of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in Greensboro, N.C. I was disappointed, however, to see a glaring error in your coverage. The Greensboro Four who



CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON



sat at the Woolworth counter on Feb. 1, 1960, included Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. (Jibreel Khazan) and the late David Richmond—not Melvin Alston and Earl Jones.

Alston and Jones, active in city and state politics, were visionaries in their effort to save the downtown Woolworth's and create a civil rights museum to honor the place where the sit-in movement started. They were not, however, participants in the sit-in at Woolworth's.

EDWARD ROBINSON  
*Greensboro, N.C.*

### A Doctor's Vocation

When a physician's work transcends occupation and becomes one of vocation, then God's grace begins to work through us, as Dr. Pat Fosarelli so aptly describes in her essay "Healing Faith" (1/18). Her essay is a beautiful testament to how we meet the suffering Christ and are blessed in our work as physicians. The Holy Spirit leads us forward and empowers us and we are able to "suffer with" our patient and share the compassion that God has for each of us—the suffering, their loved ones and those who are called to help them. God's grace allows us to "be

compassionate as [our] Father is compassionate." (Lk 6:36). Compassion is one of a physician's most powerful tools, one that brings blessing to those who wield it.

ANDRE F. LIJOL, M.D.  
*York, Pa.*

### No More Law and Order

Re "Moral Convictions," by Emily Brennan (Books and Culture, 2/22): I used to watch "Law and Order," but I don't anymore. René Balcer, the show's producer, has a very left-wing political ideology, and at times he gets very preachy about his particular political point of view. He never gives any attention to the other side—only the left's spin. I watch television for entertainment, not to be preached at from either side of the political spectrum.

JIM COLLINS  
*Farmington Hills, Mich.*

### Up With Law and Order

"Law and Order" is one of my very favorite television shows. I appreciate it not only because the stories are relevant to city life today, but also because the scripts and the acting stimulate moral reflection and discernment. Connie seems to be Jack McCoy's conscience in some episodes. She also is courageous in challenging her immedi-

ate boss at times. I still mourn the loss of Lenny Briscoe! Keep up your great work, Mr. Balcer!

JOE WALKER  
*East Grand Rapids, Mich.*

### The Seamless Robe

Thank you, William Van Ornum, for your excellent review of the movie "Extraordinary Measures" (Web only, 2/15). For over 40 years I have lived in that deep divide between rhetoric and reality for families who care for children with special needs. Both of my children, who have special needs, have lived with me their entire lives. Now that I am getting older and less able to care for them, my deepest anxiety is about what will happen to them when I am incapacitated.

I have to rely on governmental programs, as the church by and large does not have anything to offer my family. While I am avidly pro-life, I am also very critical of the pro-life groups, who should be in the forefront of helping our families and are strangely missing.

My family's needs were well known in the parishes we belonged to. I have given up on getting any kind of help for us, but there are many young families who need the kind of loving support that Catholics can and should give as part of the body of Christ. Why the disconnect between advocating for life of the unborn and then abandoning those families who give birth to a child with disabilities?

I am sad to have to say that I have been sustained throughout my parenthood by my Catholic faith but have been abandoned by my church, the people of God.

JANICE JOHNSON  
*San Diego, Calif.*



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# I Am Who Am

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (C), MARCH 7, 2010

Readings: Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15; Ps 103:1-11; 1 Cor 10:1-12; Lk 13:1-9

*“I AM the One who causes to be what comes into existence” (Ex 3:14)*

A well-known evangelical preacher recently pointed a finger at the Haitians, declaring that their own sinfulness had brought down upon them the wrath of God in the form of an earthquake. It’s such a simple explanation: If something bad happens, then the victims must have done something to deserve it. That’s what Jesus figures people are thinking when they report to him about those whom Pilate murdered and the people who were killed when a tower fell on them.

There may, indeed, be sinful causes behind these events but not on the part of the victim. Pilate, who carries out violent executions of innocent people, embodies a sin-wracked system. Deaths caused by shoddy workmanship or construction shortcuts, when profit is prized over human safety, are the result of sinful practices but not those of the ones who fall victim.

In the Gospel, Jesus does not answer the more complex question of why bad things happen to good people, but he does clearly dissociate untimely death from sin and guilt. What he emphasizes in his response is the need always to be prepared—the end could come quite unexpectedly. Are you ready?

A dear friend was recently diagnosed with a life-threatening brain

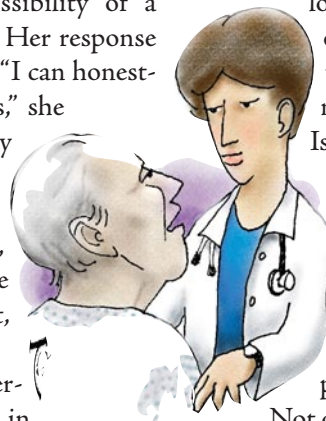
tumor. In an instant her life took a dramatic turn, as the possibility of a shortened life faced her. Her response brought many up short. “I can honestly say I have no regrets,” she said. The Gospel today invites all of us more deeply into such a relationship with God, where we too can say we are ready at any moment, with no regrets.

The Gospel also underscores God’s patience in waiting for us to repent and “bear fruit.” In Luke’s Gospel, repentance does not come about by human efforts at reforming our lives. Rather, the process of transformation begins with God’s gracious initiative. Our Lenten practices help to sharpen our ability to be transformed and to respond in such ways that can set us ablaze with divine love, like the bush that caused Moses to turn aside and look.

The examples of people dying in unexpected ways are not meant to scare us into repentance. They are a sobering reminder, however, that our time to respond to the divine invitation is limited. We would not want to miss the opportunity to enter more deeply into the heart of “the One who causes to be all that comes into existence,” as the renowned biblical scholar William F. Albright translated the mysterious divine name in Ex 3:14.

There is no adequate explanation for sudden, tragic death. Nor is there any adequate way to speak of the one

who is and who causes all to be. Yet we long for precise answers to our most difficult questions. Moses insists that he needs to be able to tell the Israelites who it is that sent him. But God rightly resists any limitations of human categorization. In ancient cultures it was thought that knowing another’s name gave you power over that person. Not only can we not have power



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Allow God to reveal to you a new name for Holy Mystery. Try it out in your prayer.
- If the end of your earthly life were near, would you be ready?
- What is an example of God’s patience with you?

over God, but any words or images we use are completely inadequate to put into speech who and what God is. Any image falls short and captures only a glimpse of our experience of the ever-expanding power of love that emanates from the cause of all being.

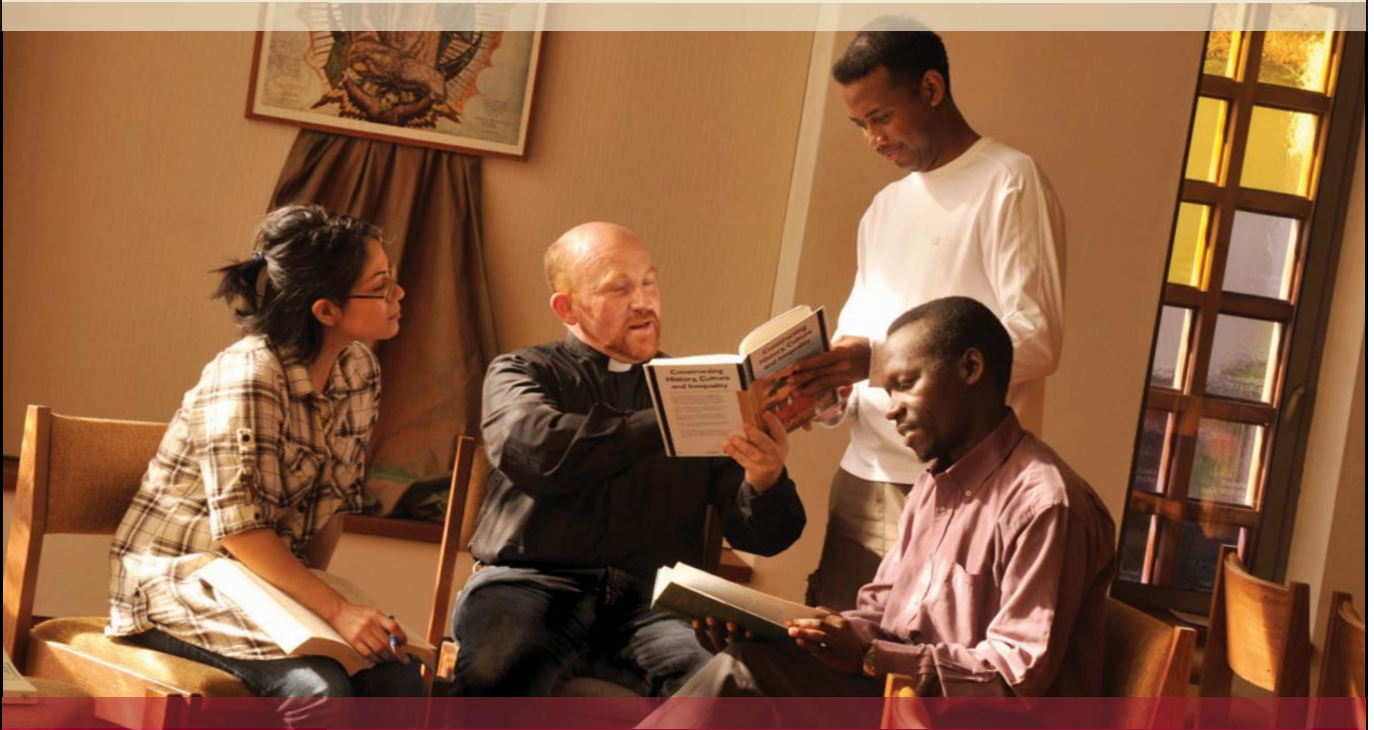
As we journey in Lent with those who are being initiated into the faith, it is a good time to let go any overconfidence, as Paul admonishes the Corinthians, allowing ourselves to be enveloped in mystery, to be fashioned anew by the one who causes all to be.

**BARBARA E. REID**

**BARBARA E. REID, O.P.**, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.

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